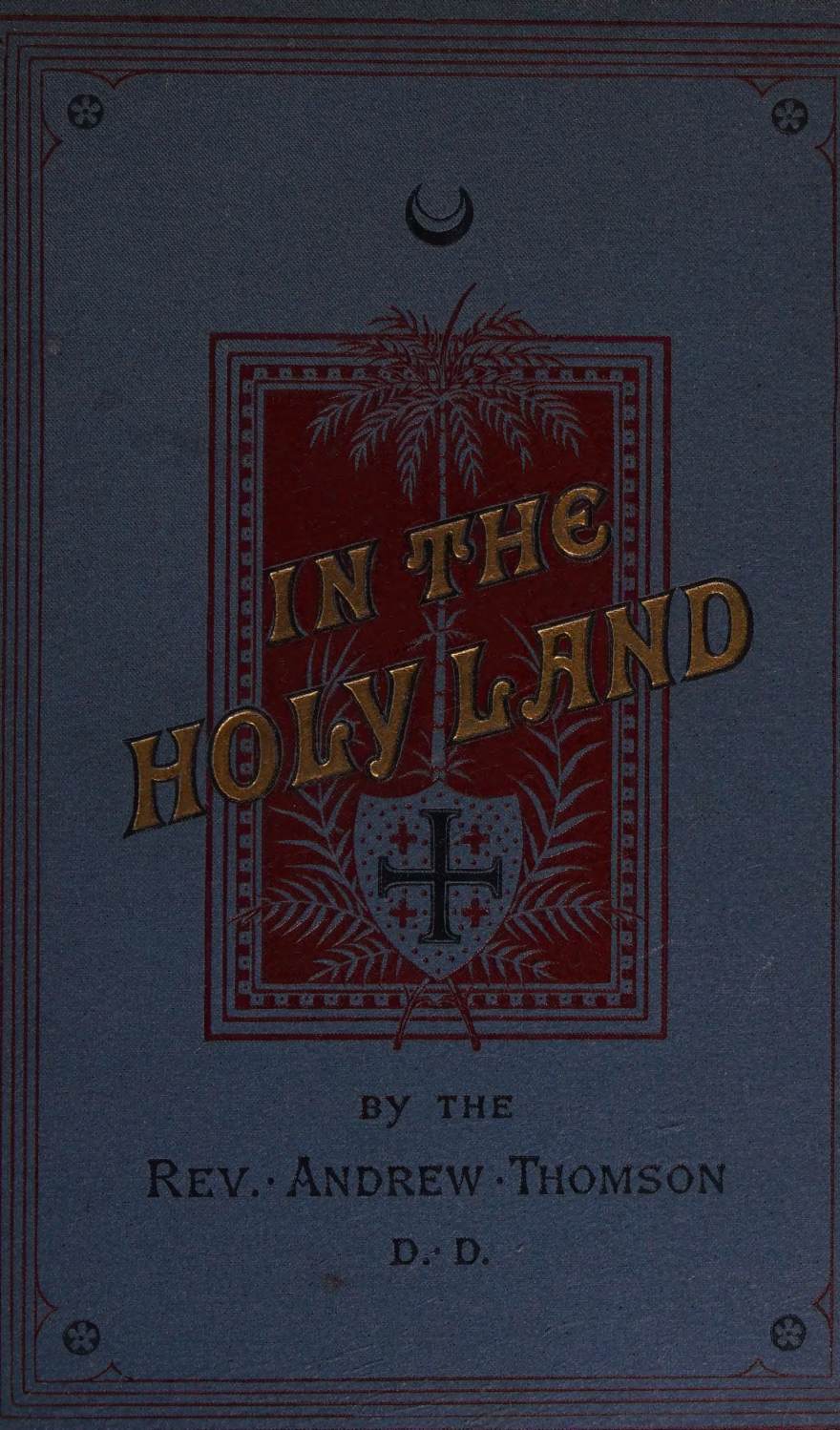


BY THE

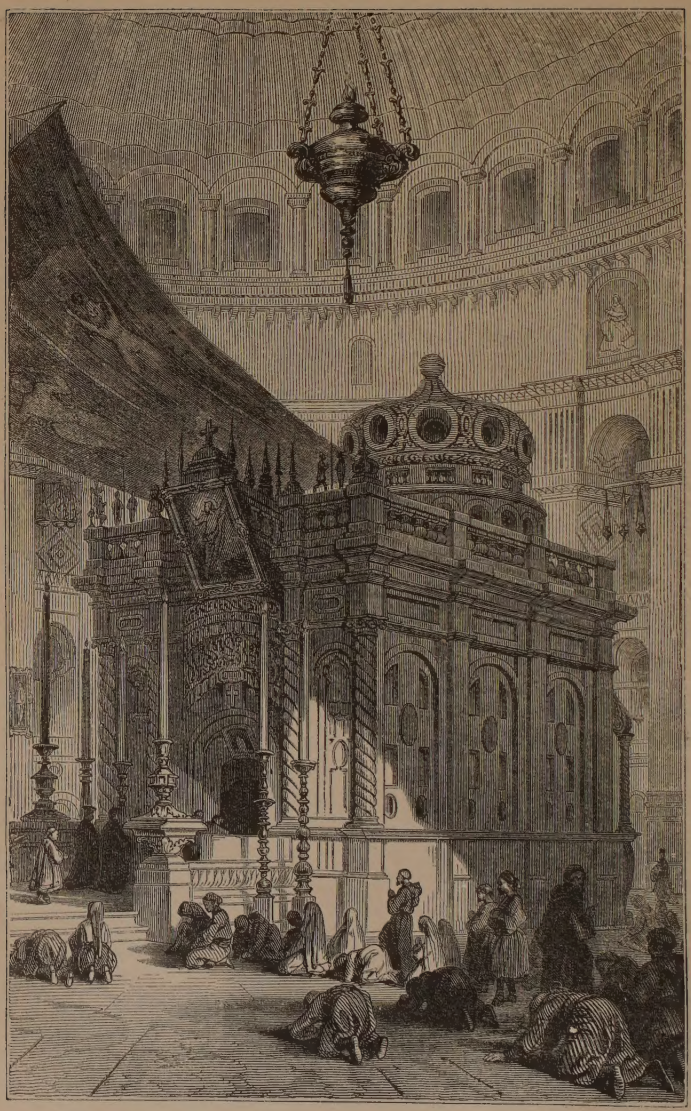
REV. ANDREW THOMSON

D. D.

Susan Cameron with love from
A. G. Murray Macgregor 1st Jan. 1913.

In 1876 The Duchess Dowager of Athole
(to whom this book belonged) made with
A. G. Murray Macgregor a tour in the Holy Land.
On this occasion Susan Cameron & Lord
Dewar were in attendance, the expedition
was in every way most successful & happy
and now near the end of my own
"travelling days" I part with the book to
S. Cameron who has never left me and
who will value the book as I have done.

A. G. M. M.



CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE—INTERIOR.

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A. H. Thole
Dunkeld
Dec. 1889

IN THE HOLY LAND.

By the

REV. ANDREW THOMSON, D.D., F.R.S.E.,
Minister of Broughton Place Church, Edinburgh.

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PREFACE.

TWO centuries ago, when the witty Fuller imagined himself to be challenged for writing his "Pisgah-sight of Palestine," he anticipated objectors by remarking in his Introduction that "it never disheartened St. Luke to write his Gospel, forasmuch as many had taken in hand to set it forth before." We fear that such an answer would scarcely be held sufficient in these days, when books upon the Holy Land are so very abundant, and when not a few of them are so very excellent; more especially as we make no pretensions to have been a scientific explorer, but were merely out on a short clerical furlough after a long and laborious pastorate, and could do little more than skim the surface of the land as the summer swallows do the bosom of the lake. Still even this class of travellers, if they only look around them, have their uses. There are tens of thousands in every Christian country to whom Palestine is a field of sacred and inexhaustible interest, because it was the theatre of those events which form the foundation of their highest hopes, and of those lessons which feed and purify their inward life. These welcome faithful descriptions of such scenes and objects, and have ready echoes in their hearts for the enthusiasm of the narrator if it has only the ring of truth about it.

And it seems next to impossible for any one who knows something of the Bible, and who has a fair measure of the power of

observation, to spend even a week in Palestine without being able to record some custom among the people, or to observe some feature in the scenery, that shall be found to shed new or increased light upon some sentence of the Word of God. To have done some little service in these ways, is about the measure of our claims to attention.

To what an extent Palestine has, almost up to the present day, continued to be a comparatively unexplored country, is proved by the fact that the most westerly branch of the Jordan was only discovered within the present century; and that only two men—Lieutenant Molyneux of the British Navy Board, and Lieutenant Lynch of the American Navy—have scientifically surveyed the river from the Lake of Galilee to the Dead Sea, and made the world for the first time aware of its unique geographical features, especially in its tortuous windings, the number of its rapids and cascades, the deep depression of its channel, and the singular impetuosity of its course. And how much that is unknown continues to invite the patient explorer, and promises to reward him with a rich harvest, may be gathered from the long list of Scripture places given by Professor Porter of Belfast, that have not yet been identified.

Probably, however, we should never have written a page of this volume, had not such men as the late Dr. Keith Johnston, one of the greatest ornaments of geographical science, as he was one of the humblest of Christians, both pressed upon us the duty of expanding the substance of our journal into a book, and kindly offered to revise our chapters as they were written. The friendly urgency of the late Sir James Simpson also helped us to decision. The contents of the volume have already appeared in a serial form,—the greater part in the "Family Treasury," some chapters in the "Sunday Magazine," and a few paragraphs in the "Day of Rest."

In our notices of the Explorations in Jerusalem, and of the ruins of the doomed cities on the north of the Galilean lake, of

which Tell Hûm is in every respect the centre, we have mingled with the results of our own observation many of the facts supplied by the Palestine Exploration Fund in its "Quarterly Paper," and especially in that exceedingly valuable collection of papers contained in "Jerusalem Restored."

Our enjoyment in our journeyings was much enhanced by our having as our fellow-traveller, Professor Milligan of Aberdeen. We cannot withhold ourselves from recording that it was one of our highest privileges, also, to have as our companion and friend during the whole of our travels, the late Dr. Deutsch of the British Museum,—a prince among Semitic scholars, a man of fine genius, of noble enthusiasm of research, of exalted aims, and most generous heart. It is impossible not to mourn that a scholar of such rare gifts and extraordinary attainments did not live long enough to fulfil the great promise of his early manhood.

It is probable that in the midst of so many points of detail there may be found some mistakes, but once more we hold over our head the shield of our old historian: "For the manifold faults herein I doubt not but the ingenious reader (finding in Palestine six cities of refuge by God's own appointment, for the safeguard of such as slew one unawares without *malice prepense*), will of his own bounty build a seventh in his own bosom for my protection when guilty of involuntary mistakes!"

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IN THE HOLY LAND.

I.

On Our Way.

The landing at Alexandria—Custom-House incidents—Street scenes [Isa. lv. 1]—*Native cafés—Native musicians—Public reader—The Scotch Church—Visit to Greek Church and Coptic Cathedral—Who are the Copts?—American mission—Ancient monuments—Snake in Cæsar's Camp—Alexandria past and present—French influence—Mixed population—The running courier* [1 Kings xviii. 46]—*Polygamy and morality—Journey to Cairo—Mud-villages* [Ezek. viii. 8; Matt. vi. 19]—*Pigeon-houses* [Isa. lx. 8]—*Onion-fields* [Num. xi. 5]—*Ill-assorted animals at the plough* [2 Cor. vi. 14]—*Entrance into Cairo.*

WE have obtained some months of generous release from a laborious but pleasant city pastorate, and are on our way to the Holy Land. We have resolved to take a glance at Egypt on our route, the partial opening of the Suez Canal having made this practicable without any serious divergence from our course. On the afternoon of Saturday, March 13, 1869, we steam into the harbour of Alexandria, and wait for a landing. The long line of waving and picturesque palm-trees in front of the Khedivé's palace tells us that we are out of Europe; and Pompey's Pillar and Cleopatra's Needle, seen at some distance in the clear atmosphere, and familiar to us from our boyhood by many an engraving and picture, assure us that we are looking on the great sea-port and emporium of Egypt.

One principal difficulty in landing consists in getting our

luggage all stowed into one boat, while probably ten half-naked and deafening Arabs are contending for each package; and they are a light-fingered race, needing to be watched. But in a few minutes we are in the Custom-house, with all safe. A very innocent box, carefully nailed and roped, carrying a saddle and bridle for use in Palestine, is the only part of our luggage that awakens the suspicion of its containing something contraband; but while we are doing our best to open it in an orthodox way from the top with a screw-driver, one rude tawny fellow lays it open with two violent strokes of an adze from the bottom, and all its contents tumble confusedly out. It is our first lesson in patience, of which we are to receive a good many more in our journeyings over the East; but while we are annoyed, the man is evidently disappointed, for there is nothing that can be either seized or taxed, and we have shown ourselves impervious to the wish for a little "bribery and corruption."

And now we are on our way to our hotel in one of the queerest and most nondescript of omnibuses, piloted by one of the noisiest of drivers, through some of the most Oriental parts of Alexandria. The contrast in our experience which a single hour has made is very striking. We had left behind us in the good ship *Poonah* a polished English society, with every form of English comfort; and now we were passing through streets that were narrow, dirty, yet strangely picturesque withal,—looking down into shops open to their full extent in front, with all their varied merchandise exposed, their proprietors sitting cross-legged, and smoking gravely or dreamily in a corner,—meeting long lines of men and boys, and of women seated after the manner of men, riding upon nimble donkeys—streams of laden camels, with their outstretched necks and ungainly pace, filling up the picture at some distance at the end of the street; while street-cries in many tongues, most lustily sounded, rent the air. In one of these street-calls we found a Biblical illustration that interested us. It was a shrill Arab cry, "Water, water, O ye

thirsty!"—reminding us of those grand words of gospel invitation in Isaiah, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters." But the resemblance stopped here, for even a cup of cold water cannot be obtained in a city of Egypt without paying for it, while the richest blessings of the Christian salvation are proclaimed to all the world "without money and without price."

We eschew in these Notes, once and for all, the fashion of complaining about the discomfort of hotels. Judging from personal experience, we should say that there has often been a good deal of exaggeration in this kind of complaints, partly arising from the wish to say a smart thing, and often appearing to have been written immediately after paying a rather highly-charged bill. After travelling through many lands, we do not remember to have suffered even once either from vermin or from filth.

We sallied forth early in the evening, wishing to have glimpses into the social habits of the people; and we visited several of the native cafés. Sherbet and coffee were the common beverage; and what a blessing it is for a country when its popular drinks are not intoxicating! Surely this was one plague of Egypt less. There was usually in each café a band of native musicians, seated on a fixed platform a little above the heads of the people. Their instruments were of a very primitive description, such as we may conceive to have been used in the times of the Pharaohs, and as we have seen represented in old woodcuts of sackbuts and psalteries in the days of the "sweet singer of Israel;" and we thought we could trace in some of them the rude original of some of our own instruments, especially the violin and the guitar. One man sang; all joined in the refrain; and altogether the execution was far from contemptible. I enjoyed the enthusiasm with which, swaying and bending their bodies and closing their eyes, the performers threw themselves into the more emotional parts of the music.

But we were most interested by what we saw in one of these houses of entertainment — a man reading aloud from the "Arabian Nights" to a fascinated audience. He sat in an elevated place on a sort of daïs, was turbaned and clothed in white muslin, and read uncommonly well, suiting the changes in his voice to changes in the story: at times swinging his body to and fro; now raising one hand and now another, —occasionally even using his feet to aid the effect; and, at the close of some passage in which he had warmed, looking round for an applause which was never withheld, but which came up with a loud "Ha, ha, ha!" from the multitude. We noticed two Egyptian soldiers come in and sip their coffee and enjoy the reading. May not a time come when Bunyan's "Pilgrim" shall be read in this manner in Eastern cafés?

The greater part of the following day, which was the Sabbath, was spent by us with Mr. Yule, the excellent minister of the Scotch Church in Alexandria, to whose house we found our way early in the morning. And here let us bear our passing testimony to the importance of placing men of his stamp—educated, prudent, and earnestly pious—at all the great seaports of the world at which English ships in any great numbers touch and trade. There is always a certain number of resident English families whom commerce has settled in such places, that need, and many of whom will gladly appreciate, the pulpit ministrations and pastoral care of a good Christian minister. The consequences have been widely mischievous when these little colonies have been permanently left "as sheep without a shepherd." Not only his labours as a minister, but the indirect influence of his character, is above all price; while it would be difficult to estimate the amount of benefit derived by British and American sailors that enter the port, especially in circumstances of temptation and in seasons of sickness. To travellers like ourselves, who were as birds on the wing, the refreshment

of public worship, when it could be enjoyed, was greatly welcome. How many have found it retracing in their hearts the fading lines of duty; amid the distraction of mind occasioned by crowding incidents and exciting novelties, restoring the sense of the unseen and eternal; and, in Leighton's beautiful words, "winding up the soul, which the body had poised down, to a higher degree of heavenliness."

On our way to morning worship in the Scotch Church, we looked in on what we may term the cathedral-churches of two very different communions. One of these was the Greek Church, in which we were disappointed to find the worshippers had not yet assembled. It blazed with a non-ecclesiastical splendour, on which, it was evident, vast expense had been lavished, but which seemed to us out of taste, because out of all harmony with the solemnity of Christian worship. There were massive silver lamps, a marble pulpit with most elaborate carvings, two gorgeous thrones—one for the Greek patriarch and the other for the Russian consul—while the walls were adorned with highly-coloured paintings of scriptural and apocryphal subjects. The whole looked as if it were designed to represent architecturally not only one of the dominant faiths, but one of the dominant powers, of the East.

The Coptic Cathedral was in many respects the opposite of all this—dark and dirty, with an old-world look about everything in it. When we entered it, it was crowded almost to suffocation, the smell of burning candles and of incense adding every moment to the poison of the already exhausted air. The building had its inner shrine, its holy place, and its outer court, somewhat like an old Jewish temple in miniature; into the first part of which the officiating priest alone entered, and from which the sound of liturgical reading issued. As the language in which the liturgy was written is now obsolete, it is unintelligible to the modern Copts; there was therefore some excuse for the manifest inattention of the poor people. The Copts do

not admit of images in their places of worship, but their temple was hung round with pictures which age as well as smoke and incense had made very dim; and to these, in common with their brethren of the more gorgeous Greek communion, they give a superstitious amount of veneration. They claim to be the aboriginal Egyptians,—the descendants, therefore, through hundreds of generations, of those embalmed ancestors who have been transferred to so many of the museums of Europe, or who still slumber in their mummy-coffins up the Nile. There is no doubt that they are the degenerate descendants, ecclesiastically, of the early Christian Church of Egypt. In common with the Abyssinian Church, though not in the same degree, their forms of worship and their religious customs show an incongruous mixture of Christian with Papal, and even Jewish and Mohammedan elements. The evangelist Mark is asserted to have been their first patriarch, and is honoured as their tutelary saint. They believe that his body rests beneath the altar in their church at Alexandria; though, if contemporary historians are to be credited, it was removed, centuries ago, to the famous Cathedral of St. Mark at Venice. It is a curious fact that there are certain posts in Egypt, such as that of "scribes," which for many generations have been held almost exclusively by Copts, for they are a quiet, ingenious, plodding race. We have seen them compared as a Church to one of their own shrivelled mummies, wrapped in old linen and adorned with faded jewels. But they have not resisted light as their sister-communion in the West has done, and there is a deference to the authority of the Bible, and a spirit of inquiry showing itself in many of their people, and even in some of their priests, which dispose us to say of the Coptic Church, "There is hope concerning this tree that it shall yet bud and flourish." It is mainly to the revival and reformation of this degenerate branch of the Eastern Churches that the American mission in Egypt has nobly consecrated its energies.

We spent several hours of the same day at the church and station of the American missionaries. The natives present did not exceed forty; but their numbers had been greater in the morning. The two sexes were carefully curtained off from each other. The whole service was conducted in Arabic. The stations and sub-stations connected with this mission are numerous, and extend up the Nile 500 miles above Alexandria, within a short distance from the ruins of ancient Thebes. Their largest amount of visible success has been at Osioot, 250 miles above Cairo, where they have a theological academy for the training of native students for the ministry. They add to preaching, schools and Scripture-reading, the vigorous instrumentality of the printing-press and the colporteur. We found a very large edition of the "Book of Proverbs" in Arabic, ready for circulation among a people who love proverbs as they love the delicious fruit of their own date-palms.

The design of these Notes is not archæological, but it seems scarcely possible even to name Alexandria without referring to Cleopatra's Needle, forming, with its twin obelisk, a rejected gift to England, now buried four feet underground, the majestic entrance to what was once Cæsar's Temple,—that beautiful misnamed monolith, Pompey's Pillar, the silent record of Diocletian's capture of this great city—the far-extending Catacombs of Old Alexandria, originally formed for sepulture, but used, perhaps, in times of hot persecution, as a refuge for the early Christians,—and Cæsar's Camp, with its old fountains and skilfully-constructed water-pipes, the scene of one of the victories of Augustus Cæsar over the partizans of Mark Antony, and of a more recent passage of arms between the forces of France and Britain, when our country lost her Abercrombie and liberated Egypt. We remember that, as we walked among its shapeless stones and scrubby grass, we came upon an enormous yellow snake, which fled from us with a precipitation which we did not regret. It seemed to us, as we wandered

over this former scene of disciplined armies and bloody conflicts, and looked on the few black Bedouin tents that were here and there scattered around, that we beheld a vivid emblem of the Egypt that is, as compared with the Egypt that once had been.

But, in reality, the greatest of all the antiquities that we saw was Alexandria itself; for it is one of the old cities of the world. What a long and strangely-chequered history passed before us, as, looking down from the base of Pompey's Pillar, we first thought of the great Macedonian himself, its founder, whose genius foresaw in it, as he laid its first stone, and engraved his name on it, the link between Europe, Asia, and Africa, and the key to the golden East; and then, as we traced its course down through the periods of the Ptolemies, the Romans, the Turks, the Mamalukes, the Bonapartes, to the subtle-minded, strong-willed, strong-armed Mahomet Ali of these modern days. To a Christian visitor, not the least interesting recollection was, that this was the place where, three hundred years before Christ, consecrated learning had produced the Old Testament Greek version of the Seventy; and that it was the birth-place and centre of that Neoplatonic school of theologians with which the names of Aristobulus and Philo are identified, which gave system and popularity to the allegorizing or mystical method of Biblical interpretation, and in vainly trying to harmonize Christianity with Platonism, corrupted its divine simplicity, and in the same degree bereft it of its divine power. The mischief of that Alexandrian school is working yet.

Two things especially struck us when looking on the Alexandria of our own times. One of these was the marked influence of France upon this city, as, indeed, upon the whole of Egypt. There was a French quarter in Alexandria; the French language was familiar to a much larger portion of the population than any other foreign tongue; French customs were on the increase; French amusements were popular, not always to the advantage of Egyptian economy or morality. Even the

chief of police was a Frenchman; and statuettes of Louis Napoleon were everywhere—in the hotels and in other public places. But this influence is likely to weaken and wither now over Egypt and all the East, when the right arm of France is broken, and her honour laid in the dust. Nations never long worship setting suns. Shall England next be in the ascendant in Egypt, and thus keep her pathway to India broad and clear, and her hold of India firmer?

And the other fact was,—what is true, indeed, of all great sea-ports, but pre-eminently true of Alexandria,—the exceedingly mixed nature of its population, as indicated not only by the varied contour and colour of the countenances, but by the differences in the dress. Walk along one of its crowded thoroughfares, or stand in one of its old bazaars, and how many nationalities will you witness in a quarter of an hour! Not only the blue-turbaned Copt, and the poor Arab with his almost colourless tunic of serge, but the white-muslined Hindu, the kilted Albanian, the gorgeous Greek, the Turk with his hybrid raiment between that of the Frank and the Asiatic, and the plain, unpicturesque American or Englishman. One dress that especially caught our notice was that of the running courier, who runs before a chariot at its full speed, warning passers-by to keep out of the way, as well as adding state and style to the whole equipage. His dress is entirely white, folded gracefully around his person, but so as to leave his lithe limbs entirely free; he carries a long wand or rod in his hand; and, apparently without strain or effort, keeps ahead of the chariot when it is at its full speed. It gave us another Bible illustration which carried our thoughts back through thousands of years; for it brought up the picture of Elijah, with all the vigour of a strong-limbed mountaineer from his native hills of Gilead, across the Jordan, running before the chariot of Ahab all the way from the sublime scene of the sacrifice on Carmel to the entrance into Jezreel.

There is one subject on which, before leaving Alexandria, we wish to touch once for all, though it needs to be handled with delicacy. Before departing from home, we had met with more than one English book in which a comparison was made between polygamy as it is found in Egypt and other Mohammedan countries, and single married life as it exists in such countries as our own; and in which it was attempted to be shown that the Mohammedan system was, on the whole, more favourable to continence and to conjugal fidelity. One writer in a well-known popular Review, and with evidently strong infidel leanings, emboldened by the assertions of these authors, actually went so far as to suggest that the whole question ought still to be considered an open one, as between polygamy and monogamy; that the balance trembled between the two systems; and that, with the light of modern statistics shining on it, the entire subject ought speedily to be reconsidered. We felt confident at the time that these assertions were grievously one-sided, as the conclusions drawn from them were groundless; and that the information of missionaries, physicians, and merchants who had long been resident in the East, would lead to a far different issue. And so we found it, beginning our inquiries at Alexandria, and ending them three months afterwards at Constantinople. Polygamy does not produce continence or foster conjugal fidelity, but tends to brutify those who live in it. Is there marriage indeed in the high and divine sense in any case in which there are more wives than one? Let any one visit the precincts of a divorce court in any great Eastern city where the religion of the Crescent dominates, and see what multitudes are every day clamouring for a separation; how brittle is the bond with which polygamy binds the husband to his wife; on what frivolous pretext wives are cast aside and cast out; and how ready witnesses are to swear anything for a bribe against a woman when she has ceased to please. The truth is, however, that these writers utterly miss the point of

the entire case. The charge we have to bring against the Mohammedan system is not simply that it fails to foster conjugal virtue, but that it wrongs and degrades the whole female sex. This is the foul spot of its dishonour that will never wash out. Where, indeed, except within the sphere of Christian influence, shall we find woman as Heaven destined her to be,—cultured into an equality with her protector, moving round a humbler but not a lower circle of duties, refining and softening the ruggedness of the other sex, and, with the hallowed light of undissembled affection, or with the stillness of consecrated friendship, giving out many of the sweetest elements which we associate with home?

On our journey by railway to Cairo, for which we set off early on the morning of Tuesday, March 13, we crossed several branches of the Nile, whose presence accounted for the surrounding fertility of many places; for, as an old historian has said, "the river of Nile is the happy genius of the Egyptian soil." We passed a great number of mud-villages, on the flat roofs of whose houses there was uniformly a pigeon-house built of the same material, and perforated with many openings—the flight of the pigeons to them and from them appearing incessant. "Who are these that are as clouds, and that fly like doves unto their windows?" With those mud-houses before us, we could understand how natural was the Eastern style of robbery, more than once alluded to in Scripture, of "digging through to steal." Nor was this the only circumstance which caught our observation as illustrating Scripture, on our drive up to Cairo. Large fields of onions and garlic, literally scenting the morning air, were under cultivation, reminding us of the tastes of the oppressed Hebrews when in their bitter bondage, and of their subsequent rebellious longings in the wilderness. Oxen, buffaloes, camels, and mules were all seen by us engaged in ploughing. In some cases a mule and a camel were ill assorted under the same yoke, and dragging at the same plough

—the connecting-pole grazing painfully on the neck of the taller animal. Is it possible to doubt that such a spectacle as this, seen by Paul on the plains of Ephesus or on the fields around his native Tarsus, must have given shape to his admonition of, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers"? Egypt, however, affords us an illustration in respect to marriage of a different kind in one of her hieroglyphics, in which a single millstone is represented as in useless motion, which some ingenious interpreters of their pictorial language insist in regarding as an emblem of the comparative unprofitableness of a celibate life!

Late in the afternoon we reached Cairo, passing into it through a long avenue of waving palms—a city not so ancient or so rich in historical recollections as the Alexandria we had left behind us, but greatly more populous, the seat and centre of Egyptian government, and "of the East, Eastern." It seemed to us like a violent anachronism that the hissing of a railway steam-engine should be heard on the scene of Addison's Vision of Mirza, and within sight of the Pyramids.

II.

From the Pyramids to Joppa.

First impressions of Cairo—The bazaars [Jer. xxxvii. 21]—*The donkey-boy—Curious police regulations—View from the Citadel—Mosque of Mohammed Ali—Popular superstition—Mosque of Sultan Hassan—Groups at the fountains—Way to the Pyramids—Prince of Wales—Egyptian task-masters* [Ex. iii. 7]—*The Pyramid of Cheops—The Sphinx—Speculations—View from the Pyramids—Unique position of Egypt in prophecy and history—The Nile—Egypt of the future* [Isa. xix. 22]—*Railway to Suez—Despotism—Appearance of Suez—Crossing an arm of the Red Sea—Ride into the desert—The mirage—Oasis—"Fountains of the desert"* [Ex. xv. 23]—*M. de Lesseps—A family picture—Emblem of the gospel—Miraculous passage imagined—Grand Suez Canal—A sand-storm—Port Said—Illness—The Russian steamer—Scene on deck—Lying off Joppa.*

WE have spoken of Cairo as of the East, Eastern. But this quality is gradually diminishing. The influence of Europe is telling on its architecture, its customs, and its costumes, and turning the picturesque into the prosaic. The wave from the West is sweeping over everything and modifying everything. When shall the wave of a pure Christianity sweep away its false religion and a hundred other evils with it, and, like the waters of Egypt's beneficent river, deposit in the minds of its people the elements of a renewed life, the germs of highest blessing?

Still, Cairo continues to be the most Oriental of all the great cities of Egypt, and our knowledge of this soon drew us out from our hotel to a stroll among its bazaars. Generally, the streets which contain these shops of Eastern traffic are very narrow; so much so, that it is often with great difficulty and much need for mutual accommodation that two persons riding

on donkeys can pass each other. The storeys of the houses as they ascend project more and more, and at length the highest storeys on the opposite sides come so near, that, on looking up, you can only see the narrowest line of sky; a custom which, though perhaps not so favourable to ventilation, effectually protects both the inhabitants and the passengers from the terrible rays of a vertical sun.

We noticed the same apparent unconsciousness of the march of time and want of "push" in those cross-legged merchants as in their brethren of Alexandria; though when we sat down near them in their own posture, and proceeded to bargain-making, their dreamy eyes speedily opened, and they made it very evident that they were wide awake. The practice referred to in certain of the "books of the Prophets" also drew our attention,—as it afterwards did in other large cities of the East. —of whole streets being devoted to one particular kind of artisanship and merchandise. One was entirely occupied with tailors; another with the making of brazen utensils; a third was engrossed with the manufacture and sale of rude, quaint mirrors; while in a fourth, innumerable nimble fingers were busy almost at the same moment with the making and selling of silken tassels.

It will not greatly surprise our readers that, amid the noise of shouting camel-drivers and donkey-boys, of curiously varied street-calls, and the incessant importunity of beggars with their everlasting "bucksheesh," and wandering, without an interpreter or guide, in tortuous streets that seemed to obey no law but that of confusion, we soon found ourselves in an inextricable labyrinth. But the donkey is the cheap and popular conveyance of Cairo; and throwing ourselves on to the back of the first we met, and simply naming our hotel to the quick-witted boy-driver, we left the rest to him. It is a mode of conveyance, however, which, in such narrow, crowded streets, requires skilful pilotage; for your legs are in much

danger of getting entangled with some passing object when you are at your full speed, and of either doing harm or getting harm. There is often an impish love of mischief, too, about the boy who is driving the animal from behind, which makes him indifferent about the rider, if he can only save his donkey. He leaves it to the rider to see all dangers ahead. We remember how an admired friend, some years before, when cantering along one of these streets at full speed, found himself and his donkey suddenly landed in a deep pit which had been opened, an hour or two before, in the middle of the street. Our friend's irritation was increased when, on extricating himself from the ugly hole, he found all the interest and sympathy of the driver and the passers-by given to the ass, which they kindly examined and stroked, while he was left to gather himself up as he best might. We suspect the Koran contains no parable like that of the Good Samaritan.

We were told, in one of our walks about Cairo, of some curious features in its police arrangements which worked effectually in preventing deeds of violence. Each of the principal crafts has a sheikh or chief who keeps his eye on the members of his own fraternity, and, knowing them all, secures the detection and punishment of offenders among them. Moreover, the whole city is divided into eight wards, under a separate police inspection; and as the greater number of the streets have no thoroughfare, and have gates guarded by a sentinel, which are closed at an early hour of the night, escape is next to impossible. Then the administration of justice, though corrupt in civil cases, is pure in criminal matters; while punishment is certain, prompt, and terrible. The consequence is, that Cairo, whatever may be the measure of its offences in other respects, is more free from deeds of violence than many European cities.

In the case of some of our greatest cities, there is no elevated point from which we can look on them so as to include them in one view; they can only be seen in detail. But in

Cairo, its lofty Citadel gives you this advantage. It was built by the famous Saladin of the Crusades on a lateral ridge of the Mokattam hills, at an elevation of about two hundred and fifty feet above the level of the city, which it is more fitted to command than to protect,—as Mohammed Ali more than once discovered during his energetic but turbulent reign. Certainly the view from this grand eminence is the noblest in Egypt, and one of the most memorable in all the East. The vast city, with its population of more than three hundred thousand persons, lies mapped at your feet, every object distinctly defined and clear in its colouring in the singularly pure atmosphere. Breaking the monotony of the brown flat-roofed surface, there are spacious and verdant gardens; gorgeous palaces; beautifully adorned public fountains; tombs of the mighty dead, as large, in some instances, as had been their habitations when living; occasional sycamores and palms casting their welcome shadows; and, most characteristic of all, four hundred mosques scattered over the city and rising high with their swelling domes and tall, white, airy minarets. Looking westward, fields of Indian-corn, groves of palms, gardens of orange-trees, intermixed with sweet-scented limes and feathery bananas, spread away in the direction of Old Cairo, and down towards the banks of the great river. And there is the resplendent river itself, the mysterious, beneficent Nile, dotted with verdant islets; while little boats, winged with white lateen sails, are steering their way in the midst of them, up the stream. Villages gleaming out here and there from an ambush of trees give life to the landscape beyond the river. And yonder, at the distance of five miles, are the mighty Pyramids, the different courses of stones which compose the enormous structures, with the Sphinx rising from the sand near them, traceable with the naked eye; and beyond these, closing up the view, are the Libyan mountains, stretching away into the illimitable Libyan wilderness.

"Beyond the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare,
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Looking to the eastward of Cairo, there is nothing but sandy waste,—dreary desolation.

There was one object of much interest within the inclosure of the Citadel—the Mosque of Mohammed Ali, a structure not so remarkable for the purity or beauty of its architectural style, as for the costliness of its material, every part of it, except its outer wall, consisting of Oriental alabaster. We were informed that while Mohammed Ali occupied twenty years in its erection, he would never allow it to be entirely finished, from the dread produced by a popular prophecy that when the last stone was laid he should die. We found afterwards that this is a common form of popular superstition among rulers all over the East—the Sultan of Turkey not excepted—and that they therefore always keep on hand some unfinished building. At the time when we entered this gorgeous structure, the worshippers were few, probably not more than six scattered over a place that was capable of containing as many thousands. We walked silently over the richly carpeted floor to the Caaba-stone which indicates the direction of Mecca, such as is to be found in every mosque, and towards which every Moslem worshipper present has his eye and his body turned. In all likelihood, this is a practice borrowed by the Mohammedans from the ancient Jewish worship, for it is now well known that there was a stone in every synagogue—both in Judea itself and in foreign countries—which pointed the worshipper in the direction of Jerusalem and its temple; and it would almost appear as if the noble exile Daniel must have had some provision of this kind in his dwelling in Babylon, where he prayed and gave thanks before his God three times a day, with his window open and his face turned towards Jerusalem.

There was one other mosque which stood out very promi-

nently before us as beheld from the Citadel, remarkable for the elegance of its proportions and the elaborate beauty of its decorations, the pride of every Moslem heart in Cairo, which we visited later in the day—the Mosque of Sultan Hassan. It was built of stones brought from the Pyramids, and adorned at an expense sufficient to have drained the resources of a province. Two majestic fountains in front of this thing of beauty —at which, when we saw them, many Moslem votaries were performing their sacred washings and purifications—were equal in elegance to the mosque itself, and in admirable keeping with it. There was a kind of aristocracy or inner sect among those engaged in their ablutions, who monopolized the purer fountain. For sanitary reasons, we should certainly have joined them in their preference. We were also struck with the fact here, as in many other places seen by us subsequently, that amusement jostled and elbowed devotion—for the open space around the sacred house, the square of the Roumaylee, was the favourite resort of half the idlers of Cairo, who never wearied in looking on the exploits of native tumblers and the tricks of magicians and Syrian jugglers, or in listening to the songs of Nubian musicians and the improvised tales of Arabian story-tellers.

All the time since we had entered Cairo, we had been fretting with a secret impatience to visit the oldest of all human monuments; and the next morning we gave the reins to our impatience, and were off to the Pyramids. The presence of the Prince of Wales in Cairo had been the occasion of greatly increasing the facilities and comforts of this pilgrimage. In honour of the heir to England's throne, the Khedivé had improvised a carriage-road all the way from his capital to the Pyramids. Instead of the old system of donkeys and drivers and dragomen, with a stock of provisions, and even, in some instances, a company of armed followers, we set off in an open carriage with one fine, dark, tall Nubian for our guide. Crossing the

Nile by a bridge of boats, we hurried on, sometimes on open, exposed parts of the road, and sometimes through long and shady avenues of acacia-trees. At some points on the way the road was still in course of being improved, and men were in the act of planting and watering young trees on either side of it. We observed that every gang of workers had a task-master over them with a thick cudgel in his hand, which was not a mere idle badge of office, but meant for use; and we thought of the Hebrew bondsmen toiling thus under a broiling sun, making bricks of mud such as that around us, and their lives made bitter to them under a far heavier bondage and more unrelenting task-masters. We were able to drive up so near that, sitting in our vehicle, we could touch the lowest stones of the Pyramid. But the eye of our Nubian guide was turned to another object than the wonderful pile. Among that motley jabbering multitude scattered at its base, he saw a Nubian dark as himself, a native of the same mud-village a thousand miles up the Nile. The recognition was simultaneous, and the next moment the two brothers had fallen on each other's neck, and were locked in each other's embrace. There was another Bible reminiscence here.

And those were the Pyramids of Egypt, the oldest and most stupendous human structures in the world! The most competent authorities on such matters have fixed the date of the erection of the principal Pyramid—that of Cheops—at 2500 years B.C., which carries us back to within a few generations of the Deluge; so that the builders may be imagined to have shaken hands with the sons of Noah. The Pyramid of Chephren bears the marks of greater skill in its masonry, and therefore probably arose a few ages later; and though it is not quite so broad at its base as its neighbour of Cheops, yet, from being built on a loftier natural platform, it appears, when seen from certain points, to be higher than the other. But the chief notice of pilgrims is generally turned to the older pile, as being

the first that is approached from Cairo, and, like the elder brother in an Eastern family, having "the excellency of dignity and the excellency of power." At first we had the experience common to most visitors, of finding some difficulty in believing in the vast proportions assigned to it, as covering at its base twelve acres; but, as we walked round it, and leaned upon its lower blocks and looked up to its apex, our incredulity melted away without our needing the additional test of mensuration. We walked aside for a little to the famous Sphinx, which, indicating equal boldness of conception with those great Pyramids, gave evidence not only of masonic skill, but of the genius of the sculptor. In length it is 143 feet, while it measures 102 feet round the forehead; the whole—with the exception of the paws and a portion of the back—being chiselled out of the solid rock. Was that colossal figure, with its human head and lion's body, an object of worship? Or was it an emblematic representation of the king, as uniting in himself the highest wisdom and power? The fact that under its breast and between its enormous paws there is a little temple with its altar, from which incense must have ascended into the expanded nostrils of the image, seems rather to favour the former conjecture, though it is not inconsistent with the other; while the emblematic theory receives countenance from the long avenues of sphinxes that have been discovered in other parts of Egypt. Imagine those heaps of stones and débris, the accumulation of more than four millenniums, to have been carried away from around the base of the two great Pyramids, that they are again encased in gray granite from Sinai, or in red porphyry from the Mokattam hills, and a second Sphinx placed on the other side of the broad path leading up to them, and we approach nearer to the spectacle of those enormous masses as the first generations looked on them.

And who built those Titanic structures, and what was the design of their builders? These are questions that have been

repeated since the Father of history, more than two thousand years ago, looked up on those same time-defying piles, and thought them old. Even could it be shown that certain astronomical principles had been recognized in their erection, this, we humbly suggest, would not warrant the conclusion that they had been built for astronomical uses, any more than the placing of a sun-dial on the corner of some modern mansion would prove that the house had been built for the measuring of time. We have listened to Professor Smyth's singularly ingenious exposition of his theory—which represents the Pyramid of Cheops as reared for a half sacred use, as the depository of the standard measure both for liquids and for solid bodies—with admiration, but without conviction. The old and popular supposition which regards them as royal tombs or monuments continues by far the most probable, especially when it is considered that human remains have actually been found in some of the smaller Pyramids. Perhaps the ambitious structure on the plain of Shinar may have supplied the first hint to the men who planned them, in which case, as quaint Fuller has remarked, "they are the younger brethren of the Tower of Babel." On this supposition, with the name of the monarch that erected them to his own glory buried in impenetrable oblivion, what a monument are they at once of human power, folly, and crime!

Yet these mountain structures, which were almost contemporaneous in their erection with the beginning of human history, and may very possibly be standing at its close, suggest more than one conclusion. They prove at how early a period human rule assumed the form of gigantic despotisms. We learn from Herodotus that twenty thousand men, relieved every three months, were employed for twenty years in erecting the one Pyramid of Cheops. The energies of a whole nation were bent for so long a period, and its resources drained, to gratify the mad ambition of one of the earliest of the Pharaohs. And

they also place it beyond doubt that Egypt must have been one of the first peopled countries, as well as one of the earliest cradles of the arts. There must have been something more than mere brute strength—a considerable knowledge of some of the great mechanical laws, as well as of the rules of masonry —to be able to raise those huge blocks to their appointed place, and to rear those Pyramids. And when we find among Egypt's earliest tomb-paintings and imperishable frescoes, pictures of the shoemaker's knife, of the weaver's hand-shuttle, and of the whitesmith's blowpipe as it is used in our own days, we cannot admit that there is a shade of extravagance in those lines of the old bard,—

> "Ere yet the heroes of Deucalion's blood
> Pelasgia peopled with a glorious brood,
> The fertile plains of Egypt flourished then,
> Productive cradle of the first of men."

And now looking down from the Pyramids upon Egypt, it was impossible not to be struck with its unique position in the religious history of the world. From the earliest times, down through that long series of ages in which a divine revelation was being given to the world through the medium of the chosen people, Egypt stands forth in history as the chief antagonist and the unchanging enemy of the Church of God. We except the period of Joseph, when the patriarch Jacob and his family found a sunny refuge in Goshen; but how few generations elapsed before their house of refuge became their house of bondage, and Israel in the brick-kilns became the most cruelly oppressed and down-trodden of slaves! Egypt, in consequence, became the vast theatre on which the more awful attributes of God were manifested, just as Palestine became the selected scene in which the wonders of his grace should be revealed. Those ten plagues in which a whole nation was punished, and shame put upon their false divinities through the very form of the miraculous judgments, awfully culminating in

the death of every first-born in the land and in the destruction of the proud Pharaoh and his armed charioteers in the Red Sea, were unapproached in their terrific scale of retribution in any of the older nations of the world. And yet this long line of ever darkening and deepening judgments taught the guilty people and their rulers no lesson of repentance. All through the centuries of the Jewish Church and the periods of the prophetic revelation, Egypt appears either as the tempter or as the persecutor of Israel, dividing the guilt, in this respect, with the Babylonian and Assyrian monarchies to the east of the sacred land.

No burden therefore reads more darkly in the "books of the Prophets" than that of Egypt. There is a minuteness of detail, a graphic picturing, an intensity of colouring, an adaptation to the characteristic customs of the people and to the characteristic features of Egyptian scenery, in such elaborate predictions as those in the nineteenth chapter of Isaiah and in certain passages of Ezekiel, that cannot be exceeded. These were spoken and placed on record when Egypt was still in the meridian of her power, and contending with the great monarchies on the banks of the Euphrates and the Tigris for the supremacy of the nations. And yet they have all been fulfilled. With Gibbon and Volney as involuntary witnesses, and modern Egypt looked down upon by us from the Pyramids, we behold events corresponding not only to every line but to every letter of the inspired oracles. The harmony is startling. When we read in those prophets that Egypt should "become the basest of nations," that "there should no more be a prince of the land of Egypt," that the country should become "destitute of that whereof it was full;" and when we place side by side with these oracles the facts that during the long ages of the Mamaluke supremacy her rulers were imported strangers and slaves —that for two thousand years no native prince has ever sat upon her throne, but its sovereignty has often been sold to the

highest bidder—that the papyrus and the flax and the manufacture of fine linen which were once her glory have now vanished, and the land which was once, with Sicily, the granary of the Roman empire, is scarcely able to supply bread to its own inhabitants,—it would be madness to call such things as these accidental coincidences. Reason says, Here are the words and the working of Him who "knoweth the end from the beginning."

It would, however, be an utter mistake to say that this state of things has been produced by a direct curse from Heaven upon the land. God usually punishes nations, and accomplishes his prophecies regarding them, by allowing their sins to work out their own natural consequences. The curse lies in the ignorance, the false religion, the profound moral debasement, and the exhausted energies of the people. They are so debased as not to be conscious of their debasement. All the natural resources of the country are just what they were when Pharaoh's daughter and her maidens came down to glass themselves in the great river. We turn from gazing on those useless Pyramids to look down on that munificent gift of God to Egypt—the mysterious, silent, solitary Nile. It is this which creates Egypt, annually renews it, fecundates it, saves it from being swallowed up by the all-encircling ocean of sand. This makes it as unique in its physical geography as we have seen it to be in its history. The singularity does not consist in the mere fact of the annual inundations of the life-giving stream, for the same thing takes place with the La Plata, the Amazon, and indeed with all great rivers whose source is within the tropics; but in this further fact, that as there is scarcely any rain-fall in Egypt, its fertility entirely depends on the Nile. Wherever it reaches, there are verdure and abundance, and

"Egypt joys beneath the spreading wave."

Beyond its influence is the reign of desolation. But then, by

the increase and extension of canals for inland conveyance, and still more for irrigation, and by the use of machinery for raising the water above its natural level, whole sandy provinces might be reclaimed, and dreary deserts turned into smiling Goshens. There is an almost miraculously exuberant fertility in the mud of the Nile when it is shone upon by an Egyptian sun. It is scarcely extravagant to say that the river is "a solution of Ethiopia's richest regions, and the vast country is merely a precipitate." The cucumber and the melon-shoot have sometimes been known to grow twenty-four inches in as many hours. There are extensive districts which cheerfully yield a rotation of four crops in the same year. The date-palm alone is to the Egyptian what the reindeer is to the poor Laplander; supplying him at once with milk and food, cordage and fuel, basket-work and clothing. And there are budding prophecies which keep alive the hope that temporal prosperity will return to this land when her people have welcomed the higher blessing. "The Lord shall smite and heal it; *and they shall return to the Lord, and he shall be entreated of them, and shall heal them.*"

Early on the following morning, we were off by railway to Suez, a long journey of 180 miles, through a region that was almost entirely desert. The old camel-road must have been drearier still, for there is only one tree visible in its long track of desolation. The railways of Egypt are the property of the Khedivé, and are under his entire management; and we had an experience of his railway rule on this journey that did not increase our love for absolute and irresponsible government. It so happened that he was to cross our line some time on that day, and no train was allowed to approach his point of transit until he had passed. The consequence was, that we were kept sitting for hours under a burning Egyptian sun, at a station whose neighbourhood was so infested by reptiles that we could almost believe that Cleopatra must have obtained from it her deadly asp.

Suez stands at the head of the Red Sea, on its western shore. There is nothing beautiful about it, looking out, as it does, upon a broad ocean of yellow sands and a narrow stripe of green water. But it has an interest to Englishmen as the point of embarkation or of landing for passengers to or from our Indian possessions; and we confess to having had a feeling of greater nearness to home when, on looking two miles down the gulf, we saw a little fleet of ships at anchor, with the unmistakable British build about them.

Our principal object in diverging thus far out of our way to Palestine, was to enjoy a day's ride into the desert on the route to Sinai, so far as the traditional wells of Moses. We crossed in a boat a little arm of the Red Sea, taking mules and muleteers with us for our trackless desert-ride.

On our right, about a mile and a half distant, the sea stretched itself out before us, gradually swelling into a breadth of apparently about six miles, mountains of considerable elevation and abruptness rising on its further side. Immediately in front of us, and towards the east, as far as the eye could reach, there spread an illimitable sea of sand. Our sure-footed animals carried us forward with a fair amount of speed, the sandy path beneath their feet sounding crisp as snow when the frost has been keen. There was no appearance of vegetation, save, at intervals, a little tuft of coarse grass struggling to live, and scarcely succeeding. An occasional lizard, yellow as the sand, and sickly, made us wonder how it contrived to pick up a living under such disadvantages. But our ride was diversified by something more exciting. Twice, in the course of four hours, we were so fortunate as to see a mirage of the desert. There appeared to rise suddenly before us at some distance, as if by an enchanter's wand, a blue sparkling lake, with men riding on camels at its brink. At times the riders advanced a little way into the lake, and the water splashed around the camels' feet. The deception seemed so beautifully real, that it

was with difficulty we could reason ourselves into the belief of its unreality. We knew how science had accounted for the phenomenon even in such remarkable instances as the *Fata Morgana* of the Strait of Messina and the *Spectre of the Brocken* in Germany. But it was only by our riding up to the spot that the illusion was entirely dispelled.

At length, after four hours' riding, a green oasis appeared at no great distance, at the sight of which our little mules pricked up their ears and quickened their pace. We found it to consist of two inclosures, probably about five acres in extent, surrounded by hedges woven with dried palm-leaves. It contained palms and fig-trees, pomegranates and tamarisks; and in the midst of these, and shaded by them, several fountains, in one of which, especially, the water bubbled up in great force, helping to irrigate and keep green a large space around it. Were these the fountains to which Moses came with his emancipated pilgrims on the third day after their wondrous passage through the neighbouring gulf, and where, by a miracle, he turned the waters into sweetness? The answer to this question depends upon another which, in spite of all that has been written on the subject, remains to this hour unsettled, Where is the point of the miraculous passage of the Hebrew host and their emergence on the sandy wilderness? The opinion has for a good while been gaining ground, that this branch of the Red Sea extended, at the period of the Exodus, much further inland and eastward. M. De Lesseps, the latest writer on the subject, believes that he traced convincing evidence of the presence of this sea a long way eastward in the line of his canal, and even professes to have identified, on the margin of the "Bitter Lakes," the scene of the miraculous deliverance. Should this theory turn out to be correct, it will rather increase the likelihood that these are the actual Marah fountains.

The little spot was curious, however, apart from those sacred associations which are supposed by many to hang around it.

We found human enterprise and domestic life even here. One family lives in a house principally built of palm-branches and thatched with palm-leaves—partially thatched only, for in the middle of the house there was an acacia flourishing and rising through the roof, with a beautiful white dove perched on one of its topmost branches, and a musket hanging from another. The master is a Levantine, has a wife and a pretty boy, and contrives to gain a precarious livelihood from such visits as ours, and also from hunting gazelles and other game over the surrounding desert.

Outside the inclosure, on a sandy eminence about a hundred yards distant, there was a large fountain with a majestic old palm bending over it. When we got up to it, a company of Bedouins were standing on its further side giving their camels drink. The salutations between them and ourselves had all the grave elaboration of the days of the patriarchs. It happened rather strangely that all the four quarters of the globe were at that moment represented at this well in the desert. Those swarthy Bedouins represented Asia, the muleteers whom we had brought from Suez were children of Africa, our companion and ourself stood sponsors for Europe, and an American artist, who had joined our group, for America. The fountain became to us an emblem of Christ's gospel with its inestimable blessings, for there was ample room around it for all, and there was water enough a thousand times over to slake the thirst of the whole many-coloured company.

On our return to Suez, we kept nearer to the sea, and tried to imagine the scene of the miraculous passage of the Israelites. In the mountains opposite, rising like a wall near to the shore, we could see openings or gorges hemmed in by hills and precipices on either side, along which the bannered multitude, guided and guarded by the pillar of fire, may have advanced towards the swelling sea. We could imagine the Israelites, at the word of Moses, advancing towards the pebbly sand, when

the waves opened before them, and the myriad hosts marched through as on a rocky pavement, the obedient waters rising high like walls of crystal on either side. The feet of the last pilgrim have scarcely touched the sand of the Arabian desert, when the waters close on the pursuing chariots of Egypt with their horses and riders, and the whole army of Egypt perishes with its king in one watery grave. We could imagine Miriam and her maidens sounding the loud timbrel and moving in the sacred dance on the neighbouring sands, and singing their song of triumph in praise of that most stupendous miracle which wrote itself indelibly in the poetry of the Hebrews, and struck terror into the hearts of the surrounding nations at the thought of "a God who was able to deliver after this sort."

On the following morning, we left Suez for Port Said, hoping to find an early opportunity of crossing from thence to the Holy Land. The first three hours of our journey were by rail to Ismailia, where, entering a small steamer, we sailed across the "Bitter Lakes," and proceeded along the Grand Suez Canal towards the Mediterranean shore. We naturally looked with much interest upon this stupendous triumph of engineering skill, which public opinion is rapidly coming to regard as not only a grand feat of modern enterprise, but an immense benefit to the world. It is impossible to withhold high admiration from the man whose genius planned it, whose energy accomplished it in the face of a thousand difficulties, physical, political, and financial, and whose hopeful enthusiasm never sank when prophecies of failure were at the loudest. In length nearly 100 miles, in depth 26 feet, in width at the bottom 72 feet, and on the surface 196 feet, it links the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, and shortens the sea-path between England and the East 7500 miles. With India, as so vast and rich a portion of the British empire, to no country in the world is it so important commercially and politically as our own. When we look back upon those useless Pyramids, the work of des-

potism, the monument of an ambition that outwitted and befooled itself, and compare them with a grand human work like this, whose tendency is to expand the commerce and increase the wealth of the world and to promote the brotherhood of nations, it is impossible not to feel that in the two we have a measure of human progress, and that in the long interval the world has been becoming wiser and better.

But nothing can ever make this canal picturesque. The ugliest canal in Holland has now and then a redeeming feature, but this is the veriest realization of dreariness and monotony. On either side it is sand—all sand. One traveller describes certain places on its banks as rendered gay and brilliant by innumerable flocks of rosy pelicans, scarlet flamingoes, and snow-white spoonbills. And we do not question his accuracy. But on the day of our voyage, we had experience of a phenomenon which made the dreariness more dreary, and drove every bird in nature to a distance. This was a sand-storm, in which the sand blew and drifted all around us, as in a violent fall of snow when the wind has risen to a gale. We are now writing with a snow-storm beating against our windows, but this is nothing to the blinding, choking, stupefying effect of a storm when the sands of the desert are rained pitilessly upon us. Eyes and ears, nose and mouth, all become foul or gritty. The pilot of our little vessel stood peering through the tempest, as we have seen shepherds in our own land when the snow was played with by a whirlwind, often at a loss to know where he was. Had this state of things continued for a fortnight, M. Lesseps would have needed to commence digging his canal anew. Travellers on their way through the Arabian desert to Mount Sinai, on some rare occasions encounter such storms. The best-equipped caravan finds difficulty in toiling on against it. The Bedouins, with their heads covered with shawls and their backs turned to the storm, leave the camels to their own guidance, and the patient animals continue moving straight

forward, now and then throwing their long necks sideways to avoid the tempest. The whole thing was unpleasant enough while it lasted, but what was this to the experience of travellers when that "angel of death," the fiery simoom, "spreads his wings on the blast"! Before we reached Port Said the evening had become beautifully calm, and the Egyptian moon looked down upon us in most serene brightness from a cloudless sky.

Port Said is the rapid creation of the same enterprise that has produced the canal. Ten years since, it consisted of a few miserable shanties, and all its fresh water was brought from a place thirty miles distant across the lake Menzaleh in little Arab boats; now, its water is brought in pipes, and it has many other of the conveniences of a European city, with a population exceeding 10,000.

To-morrow, March 21, was the Sabbath-day, and we had hoped to find our "pension," which looked out so pleasantly on the bright sea, turned into a little sanctuary; but the long fast and the wearisome sail through that howling wilderness laid us prostrate with dysentery. Those were the first hours of sadness since we had left home. But a good Samaritan appeared in the afternoon, in the person of a generous M.P., a member of the Wesleyan Church, who had been our fellow-passenger on the previous day, and who brought us a native medicine which he had obtained in Cairo. This soon restored us, and proved invaluable to many others in our subsequent wanderings. At noon on the Monday a Russian steamer hove in view, and in a few hours later had us out of sight of Egypt, promising to land us at Joppa early on the next day. The ship was crowded with a many-tongued and motley company. Pilgrims from many countries were on their way to Jerusalem to celebrate the Latin Easter. Jews reclining on the deck on little strips of carpet, were going up to keep the Passover. They could easily have taken up their bed and walked. It was a calm clear night; but the captain lost his way, and in the morning

we were considerably north of our landing-place. We could see not far off the ruined harbour of the Roman Cæsarea; beyond, the forest-crowned promontory of Carmel, and that broad, white, majestic mountain, rising like a wall many thousand feet to the sky, was the snowy Hermon—a grand, welcome, unexpected vision. It was therefore near mid-day before we cast anchor and lay off Joppa.

III.

Our Ascent to Jerusalem.

View of Joppa from the sea—Mischievous boatmen—Biblical associations [2 Chron. ii. 16; Jonah i. 3; Acts ix. 36]—*Historical associations—Sources of modern prosperity—Elders sitting in the gate* [Ruth iv.]—*House of Simon the tanner—The outlook towards the sea* [Acts x.]—*Correlation between the events of Scripture and the scenery of Palestine—Ritter—The Joppa gardens—The reckless rider—The Pasha's road—The Sharon valley—The soil and the scenery* [Deut. xi. 10–12]—*The riderless horse—A difficulty—The land of the Philistines* [Zech. ix. 5]—*Lydda—Eneas and Dorcas—Fuller and Faber—The convent of Ramleh—Scene in the courtyard—Monkish cookery and lenten fare—a Scottish nobleman doing penance—The midnight sky of Palestine* [Gen. xv. 5].

OUR landing at Joppa had no spice of adventure about it; for though our ship cast anchor about a mile from the shore, the sea was comparatively calm, and we had none of the agony of conscious danger, which makes the next moment's sense of safety doubly sweet. We had time, therefore, as the jabbering Arab boatmen rowed us to the landing-place, to realize the main features of the picture that lay before us.

That narrow sandy beach stretching far southward from Joppa is the shore-line of the country of the Philistines, who were alternately the persecutors and the tempters of the people of Israel—thorns in their eyes, and snares to their feet. The waves of the sea at certain places still dash up to the ruins of their crumbling castles, and to the long desolate temples of their idol-gods. Those sandy downs, again, stretching northward to the Bay of Acre, which remind us of the dunes of Holland or of our own Lincolnshire, and which are the haunt

of many a graceful gazelle, conceal behind them what was once the exuberantly fertile valley of Sharon; and those mountains which bound our view inland are the hill country of Judah, rich alike in reminiscences of peace and of war, of bannered hosts and of quiet "loopholes of retreat." And that Joppa itself, to which every stroke of the oar is bringing us nearer, built upon a conical mountain, and rising in tiers of streets to its summit—which is crowned with a half-ruined Turkish citadel—looks imposing and even picturesque as beheld from the sea. But what an entrance to the landing-place! A strip of water, apparently not more than forty feet wide, with jagged rocks on either side, as if eager for the work of destruction, is your only passage. What must be the danger in a rough sea, when one unskilful stroke of the oarsman might impale the boat on either rock, and send everything to the bottom? Hundreds have perished in this way within a few yards of land, with no newspaper to record the catastrophe. This treacherous port, with its usually foaming surf, has been well described as the "true sea-monster which has devoured many an Andromeda, for whose deliverance no gallant Perseus was at hand." Even in calm weather, like to-day's, there was a swell here; and the mischievous boatmen kept us tossing for a time between the points of the two ugly rocks, hoping that our fears or our impatience to land might perhaps better their bargain. But we looked stolid and were inexorable, and the disappointed rascals allowed us at length to plant foot in Palestine.

Experiences like these, as well as care for our luggage, which many in that swarthy, bare-legged multitude had an unpleasant fondness for handling and lifting, as well as the miniature Babel in the midst of which we found ourselves, were by no means favourable to sentiment, and indeed made us for the time very prosaic and matter-of-fact. It was only when, passing through an ancient archway, and ascending by blind alleys and narrow steep lanes incredibly filthy, we were welcomed

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into the house of the English consul, that we became gratefully awake to the fact that the desire and the dream of a lifetime had begun to be realized. As we looked forth from the consul's house, which stood high on the crest of the mountain, the Biblical associations connected with Joppa passed rapidly before us. Without going so far back as Pliny, who would make this place antedate the Deluge, we are safe in regarding it as one of the oldest towns in the world. When the land was first divided among the tribes by Joshua, it was granted to Dan under the name of Japho—"Why did Dan remain in ships?"—and all down through nearly three millenniums, it has been the sea-port of Jerusalem and the chief western sea-port of Palestine. Cedars and pines which had been felled on the slopes of Lebanon for the building of both temples were borne on floats to this place, and carried up on waggons to Jerusalem. It was here that the rebellious Jonah found the ship about to sail for Tarshish, in which he took flight from his unwelcome mission; only to be pursued, however, by the storm as God's angry messenger, and cast on shore, as God's prisoner, by the sea-monster. Here in the earliest Christian times Dorcas plied her nimble needle, and made coats and garments for its widows and orphans "whilst she was with them," for "the lantern of men's good deeds cast the best light when carried before them, and done in their lifetime." And here also, when her useful life was cut short too soon, she was restored by miracle to her weeping beneficiaries. And down somewhere on that shore, where the white surf is now playing with the sand, Peter once dwelt in the house of Simon the tanner, and was favoured with that teaching vision which told him that, under the new dispensation, the Gentile was to stand on an equal platform of privilege with the Jew.

And historical associations mingle with and succeed these sacred recollections. For Joppa has seen the prowess of Maccabaean patriots, has stood the brunt of Roman assaults, has

shuddered and bled under Saracen domination, has risen to fresh life under the more humane rule of the Crusaders, and, after sinking almost out of notice for ages, has in later times startled the world by those wholesale massacres, of which it became the scene under the first Napoleon, which have left stains upon his character which no chemist's or sophist's art will ever wash out. A traveller, writing two centuries ago, records that "of this great city at this day only two old towers do survive." But its soap manufactories, its cultivation of silk in the neighbouring gardens and in mulberry orchards that stretch northward for some miles, the abundance and unrivalled excellence of its fruits, and, above all, the fact that it is the gate of entrance for pilgrims from the West to Jerusalem, have once more gradually raised it from its ruins, so that it is now supposed to number a population of six thousand. Of these, by far the greater number are Mohammedans; more than a thousand are Christians of the various Eastern creeds; there are a few Jews, with an unusual sprinkling of those adventurous vagabonds who abound in all sea-ports.

We were told that at the northern gate of Joppa, which is its only entrance landward, there might still be seen, amid the noise of braying donkeys and wrangling Arabs, the cadi or native judge, surrounded by white-bearded elderly men, hearing causes and dispensing a kind of rough summary justice, such as was seen in the gate of Bethlehem in the days of the sorrowful Naomi and the manly Boaz. It was one of those sights which we should have specially enjoyed, but we arrived too late in the day for witnessing it.

By the help of the consul, however, we found a trusty guide to the traditional house of Simon the tanner; and we lost no time in visiting it, as we had arranged to proceed in the afternoon on our way to Jerusalem so far as Ramleh. There is a fountain near the house, which is affirmed to have been useful in Simon's craft; and we saw a solitary fig-tree beginning to

send forth its buds along the gable-wall. We ascended by a well-worn stair through a succession of storeys, and emerging from the half-darkness by a kind of open trap-door upon the flat roof, looked forth upon the deep blue Mediterranean, spreading, as if illimitably, to the west. And was this the actual house of Simon the tanner? Of course not. But it may just as probably be standing on the site of the hospitable craftsman's house as any other. Suppose, as some have suggested, that his tan-work must have been outside the town, still his residence may have been in it. And to some such roof as this in Joppa, Peter must often have ascended to pray; from some such point as this he must have looked out on that very sea; on some such spot as this he must have beheld that vision which so enlarged his mind, and was to him as a newly-written page in the volume of revelation.

And there was a divine fitness in the choice of such a scene for such a communication. His back was turned upon Judea; he was looking in the direction of "the isles of the Gentiles;" and doubtless his thoughts far outstripped his natural sight when the heavenly message, wrapped in symbol, told him that those Gentiles were now to be "fellow-heirs and partakers of the same promise in Christ by the gospel." The Dean of Westminster has wrought out this idea with much ingenuity and beauty. But he has stopped short in its application half-way. There was a double communication from the skies. Simultaneously with that to Peter at Joppa was that to Cornelius the centurion at Cæsarea, the one Roman sea-port of Palestine, which also looked out towards the far west. And there was a marked felicity in the arrangement that the key which was to open wide the door of the Christian Church to the Gentile world should be put into the apostle's hands at the one place, and that the door should actually be opened by him at the other.

Few things, indeed, more strike the mind of a traveller in

the Holy Land than the way in which the events recorded in Scripture, and the scenery in the midst of which they are said to have occurred, fit into each other. The locality and all the minuter outward incidents perfectly tally. The fact ever recurring in new forms, at once startles and delights you, and you receive a deepened conviction that the record must be true. We had noted this impression more than once in our journal; and since our return home, we have been gratified in finding it so strongly expressed in the pages of the German Ritter. Speaking of the Sinai Peninsula, he says, "We have also discovered a remarkable correlation between the events which are said to have transpired there, and the scene where they transpired. And it is just as strikingly the case," he adds, "in Palestine; and the geography of the country, as we find it to-day, is the strongest testimony of the truth of that history which purports to emanate thence. The natural scenery of Palestine speaks with but one voice in favour of the Bible; every word of the sacred narrative receives its best interpretation by being studied in connection with the place where it was recorded. No one can trace, without joy and wonder, the verification which geography pays to the history of the Holy Land. So strong is the argument drawn thence, that the most subtle dialectician is baffled by it, and is entrapped in the net which his own sophistry has spun." We shall see more of this as we proceed.

It was some hours yet before sunset when, having engaged a temporary dragoman with horses and mules, we left Joppa, intending to spend the night in one of the convents of Ramleh, about nine miles distant. We slowly steered our way among multitudes who were keeping holiday outside the walls, and had extemporized bazaars erected for the sale of nuts and fruits, nondescript confections and cooling drinks; and we were soon down on the level path. Our way then led through the midst of the famous gardens behind Joppa, which were fenced in on either

side by lofty hedges of the prickly pear. The fig-tree was sending forth its tender buds. The orange, the citron, the lemon, the apricot, the pomegranate, the almond, were all in their vernal glory. The air was soft and balmy with more than "Sabean odours." Much of the wealth of Joppa is obtained from these gardens, and much of their produce is exported to Europe, and reserved for royal banquets. The light sandy soil is favourable to the growth of the trees and to the size and delicacy of the fruits, and the trees are kept under perfect irrigation by the constant working of hundreds of Persian water-wheels, which bring up water in abundance from what many believe to be a vast subterranean river which percolates silently beneath into the neighbouring sea. The conditions of culture must be exceptionally favourable, for when trees from these gardens are transplanted to other places and subjected to the same treatment, the fruit speedily degenerates.

As we were riding along at a moderate pace, a young man, gaudily dressed after the native fashion, rode furiously past on a fiery steed, whom we were to meet with again in other circumstances before our day's journey was ended. We have spoken of a road, and there are fragments of the way up from Joppa to Jerusalem which have some claim to be so described. The Pasha has made his first attempt at road-making on this route. But, like all his other attempts in the direction of civilization, it has been spasmodic, fitful, reluctant, and has stopped short whenever his exchequer threatened to become a little shallow. You have, therefore, road-making in all its degrees on this first journey—some places finished, many more half-finished, and therefore intolerably rough and impassable, and others little more than marked off, and scarcely touched as yet by the spade or the mattock. We understood that an omnibus of rude construction, and without springs, had once or twice attempted the journey on this abortive road to and from Jerusalem, and that it had done its work with difficulty in the course of a week.

The passengers must surely have been bribed to travel by it. One day on it might have served as a severe penance for any refractory monk in the Ramleh convent, where we were hoping to spend the night. But this is the only road within the boundaries of the Holy Land, as that wonderful omnibus is its only wheeled conveyance. After to-morrow we must be content to ride on paths that owe everything to natural causes: upon hard, uneven rocks; among boulder stones and scraggy bushes; upon mountain ledges with deep ravines far beneath, on which a false step would be destruction; in the dry beds of mountain torrents; and sometimes even in gravelly channels where the water is yet flowing. Alpine passes are child's play to some of those giddy rides which await us on the way down to Jericho and in the region of the Dead Sea. Nervous people of either sex had better satisfy themselves with donkey-rides in Egypt, or with the luxuries of a Nile boat up to the First Cataracts.

But how delightful to us was that first afternoon in the Holy Land! The air was wonderfully exhilarating. Then everything was new, and seemed to have a hue of sacredness upon it. Keeping generally aloof from the Pasha's unfinished path, we rode briskly along on the green-sward, and by the banks of sparkling streamlets making their sweet music, with wild flowers of every form and colour rising above the knees of our horses, even to our stirrups. No wonder at this luxuriant herbage; for we were skirting along the valley of Sharon—the name in Scripture for abundance and beauty—and it was fertile and joyous yet, even after centuries of neglected culture and consequent decay. Looking around, we could see brairded fields in some places, ploughmen turning up the soil in others, and here and there villages glittering on commanding eminences, with the ever-present palm waving in the afternoon breeze above the loftiest houses. It was impossible, with our recollections of Egypt so fresh in our memories, not to be reminded of the contrast between the two countries traced so many

thousand years before, in a few bold touches, and yet with so much discriminating accuracy, by the pen of Moses, when Canaan was still only the land of promise to the Israelites. "The land, whither thou goest in to possess it, is not as the land of Egypt, from whence ye came out, where thou sowedst thy seed, and wateredst it with thy foot, as a garden of herbs. But the land, whither ye go to possess it, is a land of hills and valleys, and drinketh water of the rain of heaven. A land which the Lord thy God careth for: the eyes of the Lord thy God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year even unto the end of the year."

But our enjoyment was suddenly interrupted by seeing the horse which had passed us less than an hour before, feeding riderless on the green-sward, and its rider lying on the ground, at no great distance, motionless, and apparently dead. His eyes were closed, blood was oozing from his mouth, and it was only after the repeated application of stimulants that we could discover any signs of remaining life. The poor lad had been dreadfully stunned. But what struck us most was, that although several natives passed quite near us while we were doing our best to restore him, none of them could be induced to stand and help us. There was a glance of curiosity from a safe distance, and then a "passing by on the other side." It was like shadows from the great parable. It was impossible to guess whether they were afraid of being complicated in some way with the accident, or whether all humanity had been driven out of them. We were sadly at a loss what to do. We could not leave the man alone, perhaps to perish from want of care; and yet, if we delayed much longer, the chances were that we should not only be benighted, but should find the convent full. At length we saw two men approaching with a donkey, and drew their attention by signs to the helpless youth, whose head was meanwhile held gently up by our faithful dragoman, Giuseppe. We used every measure short of physical force to

make them stop, and the sight of money which we offered them to "take charges with him," had a wonderful effect in charming their somewhat dubious humanity into action. The half-dead man was placed by us on the back of the donkey, held on by one of the natives on either side, and borne away to the nearest village. The episode did not encourage us to attempt "feats of noble horsemanship."

We had an experience this afternoon which was more than once repeated in subsequent parts of our travels,—the mortification of leaving unvisited districts of Biblical interest which were out of the common route of visitors. From elevated points in the finely undulating region through which our path now lay, it was possible to look into the border of the Philistines; but every step was meanwhile bearing us further away from it. We should have liked to wander for a few days in a territory whose older memories were so interwoven with the exploits of Samson and with the history of the ark of God, and to have visited the seats of those five satrapies, and those homes of giants and men of renown, whose energy and military prowess scarcely succumbed before any power but that of David and his mightier son. We should have liked especially to visit the busy market of modern Gaza, with the sturdy independence of a border city; and to have passed to Ashkelon, once the proudest city of the lords of the Philistines, and now with its ruined walls inclosing ruined houses and tangled gardens, its lofty theatre a desolation, its columns of gray granite that had given a look of grandeur to its formerly busy harbour lying prostrate and lashed by the invading sea, and all for many a past age abandoned by every human being as if it were an accursed thing;—and in the two places to have seen the prophecy of Zechariah accomplished to the letter in both its parts, that "the king should perish from Gaza, and Ashkelon should not be inhabited." And, beyond this, we should have liked to verify by personal observation the remarkable state-

ment made to us by an eminent traveller in respect to the average height of the modern inhabitants of Philistia. It is understood that the average tallness of a native of Syria or Palestine is five feet eight inches. Can it be true that the height of the modern Philistine is considerably above six feet? This is a fact fertile in matter for speculation, and curious in reference to the inhabitants of a land which boasted of its giant races so early as the entrance of the Israelites into Canaan.

While we are endeavouring to digest this mortification, our notice is turned to a village towards the north-east, on which the slanting rays of the descending sun are shining brightly, and to which a road had forked off some little time before. It is the Lydda of Scripture, and the Diospolis of Jerome and Eusebius as well as later writers. It was great and important in the times of the Crusaders. It is now a very poor village, embosomed in the midst of rich gardens, whose undying fruitfulness no neglect can entirely repress. It is an object of Christian interest from the fact that it was here that Peter cured the palsied Eneas of his long malady of eight years; and that to this place the sorrowing messengers from Joppa brought the intelligence to the same apostle of the death of Dorcas, which bore him as with winged feet across the intervening miles to her death-chamber, and ended in her resurrection to life.

It is interesting to contemplate together those two early Christian disciples, who were almost simultaneously the subject of the apostle's miraculous power. Does not the one represent the service of suffering, and the other the service of action? We are apt to prefer the working disciple before the patient one enduring in silence. But the golden balances of Heaven are not in our hands. Who can tell by which of the two God was most glorified and Christ best served?

To Englishmen this little Sharon village has, besides, another

kind of interest, as being the birth-place, and containing in the corner of a half-ruined mosque the tomb, of St. George, the tutelar saint of England, whose famous legend, as trampling on the dragon, has, after an interval of some reigns, been restored on certain of our English coins. Old Fuller lets out his wit, and perhaps also some of his wisdom, on this popular legend, when he adverts to the coincidence between it and the story of Perseus and Andromeda, of which the neighbouring Joppa is the scene: "All I will add is (I hope without offence) this ensuing parallel. In Joppa the valour of Perseus is celebrated for freeing Andromeda, daughter of King Cepheus, tied with chains to the rocks, from the fury of a sea-monster to which she was exposed. In Lydda the puissance of St. George is remembered for delivering the nameless and only daughter of a certain King of Libya from a fiery dragon, to whom she was tendered by lot to be devoured. It is pity," he continues slyly, "these two stories should be parted asunder, which will both in full latitude be believed together. Hard to say whether nearer, the two places or two reports. He that considers the resemblance of their complexions will conclude Fancy the father, Credulity the mother, of both; though we need not presently reject all the story of St. George for fictitious for some improbable circumstances appendant thereto." Reland and others, in their eagerness to separate the germ of fact from the drapery which poetry has woven round it, have gone much further back, as is well known, in their speculations, and have thrown out the idea that the story about Andromeda and Perseus originated from some confused account of Jonah and the whale which had reached the Greeks through sailors of Tarshish. If any one will look into the pages of Faber, in his "Horæ Mosaicæ," he will find that imagination has played quite as wildly with some of the traditions of the Deluge.

We were benighted before we reached the convent gate at Ramleh. Our efforts at surgery with the unhorsed rider had

delayed us much longer than we had counted on; but this inconvenience was not to be measured against the satisfaction of having helped to save the life of a fellow-man, whom we had found wounded and half dead. The courtyard of the convent was crowded with pilgrims, many of them of a very unpilgrim-like appearance, and representing more than half the nations of Europe; and they scanned with staring curiosity the last arrived. The mules and horses stamping in the court made it difficult for us even to move. It was a new thing for us to be served at dinner by barefooted and tonsured monks, girded with ropes, and as speechless as if they had been under a vow of silence.

But those travellers are not to be envied who arrive at these houses with a keen appetite, especially when it is late in the evening, and the locusts that have preceded them have dined. We had a truly lean and lenten fare, which did not make us in love with ecclesiastical cookery or monkish larders. There was a pleasure, however, in thinking that the dronish, monotonous life of these poor men was broken in upon during some weeks of the year by a stream of restless spirits from the outside world. It is not the first time that we have seen a monk in some remote nook of a hospice like this, devouring a newspaper with more than the *gusto* with which we had vainly tried on that evening to devour our meagre, ill-cooked dinner.

We wonder whether those monks keep a journal; for, if so, they could have recorded that, a few weeks before, in the court of that same convent, a certain rich and amiable Scottish nobleman, the latest and most splendid pervert to Romanism, might have been seen walking up and down for hours, stripped to the waist and barefooted, evidently performing some severe penance. We acknowledge to have felt intense mortification at this description, received from a friend and eye-witness: for this penance implied a confessor and a soul-director behind it all; and

it seemed studiously imposed for the purpose of breaking the spirit of a man of rank and education into unquestioning obedience, not to Christ, but to the Church, and of crushing out of him the last embers of that holy fire of true Protestantism which makes us "call no man Master upon earth."

We contrived, before turning into our stifling dormitory, to walk out into the solitude and darkness and look up into the midnight sky. How glorious seemed those many mansions of our great Father's house! It was a purifying, soothing, soul-enlarging sight. Those southern latitudes favour the star-gazer, and, as it were, increase and brighten the revelation made by the visible heavens. No wonder that such a vision kindled at once the soul of poetry and devotion in the soul of the boy poet watching his father's flocks by night upon the hill-sides at Bethlehem. We had stood in the gardens around Geneva, and looked up into its evening sky mirroring itself in the noble lake beneath. We had leaned on one of the bridges over the Arno at Florence, and wondered at the silvery glory of the Italian firmament,—

> "Bespangled with those isles of light
> So wildly, spiritually bright."

But that sky of Palestine has a diviner glory still. Not only do the orbs seem far more numerous, and new constellations beam down upon you, but the whole impression is different. We have seen it noticed by some travellers that the stars appear to be more separated from the sky, and not to be so much like lights fixed upon a solid pavement as like golden lamps suspended from the blue canopy, or floating in ether, under the guidance of a hand that is invisible, but omnipotent. This is true. And therefore we could well understand how mightily such a vision must have helped the faith of Abraham, and given an imperishable distinctness and reality to the promise when Jehovah "brought him forth abroad" from his tent at midnight, and said, "Look now towards heaven, and tell the stars if thou be able to num-

ber them: and He said unto him, So shall thy seed be." The old habits of the student came back strongly upon us, as we lay awake on our bed that night, and mused on the many analogies between all true believers and those lights of heaven. And we glided gradually into sleep over the unsolved question: "Is this Ramleh indeed the Arimathea of Joseph, the honourable counsellor?" We shall see.

IV.

"Within Thy Gates, O Jerusalem."

Ramleh in the morning light—Is it the Arimathea of Joseph?—The start for Jerusalem—Scepticism and half knowledge—A Scripture difficulty solved [Luke ii. 43–45]—*Irrepressible fertility—Testimony of old travellers—Entrance on mountain scenery—Ladron—Amwas—Rash inductions—Ajalon—Gibeon—Upper and Nether Beth-horon—The scenery and the inspired narrative* [Joshua x.]—*Mid-day repast—Our one-eyed dragoman—"Excelsior"—Ancient fertility of the land—Voltaire and Bayle—Coming fertility, how and when?* [Isa. xxxii. 13]—*The Waldenses—Peculiar shape of the mountains—Abu Gosh—Kirjath-jearim—The true Emmaus—Alpine experiences—Scenes clustering with histories—A ludicrous adventure—Absorbing expectation—First look of Jerusalem—Visions of the past—Tarrying at the Jaffa Gate—"Within thy gates, O Jerusalem."*

WE had only time to take a hurried glance at Ramleh; but we saw it to advantage in the light of a morning that was singularly bright, and when a gentle breeze was bearing health to us on its wings. It is a town of considerable importance, with a population somewhat above five thousand; two-thirds of whom are Moslems, the remaining third Christians principally of the Greek Church. Its streets were narrow and filthy; its gardens and orchards beautiful and fragrant. The sand from certain quarters, especially from the south-west, is not only blown up to its walls, but drifted into its lanes—like the world intruding on the Church and blighting its fruitfulness—and, along with minute particles of alkali from the accumulated heaps of its ancient soap-works, afflicts more than half the people with eye disease, many of them with blindness. It abounds in mosques and minarets, though the architectural style of the greater number of the mosques makes one

suspect that they were originally Christian churches, built in the time when Richard of England and his Crusaders had their head-quarters at Ramleh, and that, by the addition of the indispensable minaret and a few internal changes, they were adapted to the worship of the false prophet. There is one noble tower of extraordinary height, commanding a view from beyond Carmel on the north to the furthest extremity of Philistia on the south, which a competent authority declares to have been originally "the magnificent campanile of a Christian temple." It is not the only instance in Palestine in which the hawk has taken possession of the nest of the dove. This town owed its importance at an earlier period to the fact that it was the point of intersection for the road from the sea-port of Joppa to Jerusalem, and the great caravan road from Damascus into Egypt. It is mainly dependent now on the fact that it is the first halting-place for the night for pilgrims from the West on their way to Jerusalem.

Is this Ramleh, then, as monkish tradition would persuade us to believe, the Arimathea of Joseph? We should have liked to have been able to identify it as the place where dwelt that honourable counsellor who yielded up to our Redeemer his own rocky tomb "where never man had been laid." But there is really nothing solid or tangible on which to base such a belief. Ramleh, which signifies "sandy," has no etymological kindred with Arimathea, understood to be a form of Rama, which signifies "height," though we suspect it was some imagined connection of this kind that first gave rise to the tradition. Then the monks, having got hold of this conjecture, were not slow in finding out, not only the house of Joseph, but of his friend Nicodemus, and we know not how many others. Out of an almost invisible thread of fact they will weave you a whole web of baseless inventions. But the notices of old ecclesiastical chroniclers are clear in assuring us that Ramleh was of Saracen origin, and owed its existence to the famous Solyman in the

eighth century; while they dwell with probably some pardonable exaggeration on its early greatness, when it was surrounded by lofty walls with twelve gates and many strong towers, which bade proud defiance alike to hostile borderers and foreign invaders. Unquestionably there are various towns in Palestine which sprang into existence after the Christian era, just as there are trees now common over the whole land, such as the prickly pear and the Damascus mulberry, which were unknown in the times of our Lord. The true Arimathea remains hidden perhaps under some green mound, to stimulate the curiosity and reward the researches of later travellers.

We started from the convent gate of Ramleh at an early hour, for we must enter Jerusalem that day before its gates were closed. The practice of taking advantage of the early morning for travelling is a necessity in the East, in order to get the full benefit of the cooler hours of the day, and to have time for the rest and repast at noon, when travelling would be intolerably oppressive and often dangerous. But while this is the unvarying practice when proceeding from day to day on a pilgrimage, it is never done on the first day of departure. On that day the party does not leave until within a few hours of sunset, and often pitches its tent on the first night within sight of the place which it has left. This was our uniform experience; as on our leaving Joppa yesterday, and afterwards on our setting out from Jerusalem and from Damascus. The custom, which has all the authority of a law, is very ancient, and allusions to it can be discovered in Jewish writers at least a century before Christ. The reason in which it appears to have originated was the very simple one that, if, on the first evening of unloading the baggage, it was found that anything of value had been left behind, or anything indispensable to the journey unprovided, there might yet be time to return and procure it.

We should not have adverted to this custom, were it not that it seems of some use in illustrating one of the most beautiful pass-

ages in the history of our Lord. When Joseph and Mary were on their way back from Jerusalem on the first occasion of their visit with Jesus to the Temple at the feast, they discovered, when halting at sunset, that their wondrous child was not in the company. The fact has long been used as a stock objection with infidels, and with interpreters who dwell on the border-land of infidelity, and it has even been picked up and appropriated by Strauss as casting doubt on the reality of the entire narrative. Was it credible, it has been said, that our Lord's parents could have taken a long day's journey, and never once have inquired for a child so deserving of their love? This is another instance of that sceptical quarrelling with the Scripture narrative which has its origin in half-knowledge. Joseph and Mary, it is probable, were only a few miles distant from the city when they made their painful discovery. We saw Jerusalem, on the day of our leaving it, from the place of our encampment on our way south-eastward.

There was high enjoyment in that morning's ride. The sky was beautifully blue; the air was balmy; the lark was singing far up in the heaven; clouds of white pigeons sailed over our heads; birds of varied song made sweet music in the neighbouring olive-groves; the earth beneath our feet was a rich carpet of flowers of every form and colour. Rue and fennel, anemones and wild roses, lupin and narcissus, gracefully cupped lilies, golden striped tulips, and other flowers familiar to us at home in our meadows and on our road-sides, which we knew better by their names in our old poetry than by their nomenclature in botany. There were rich beds of wild thyme, the haunt and feeding-place of the wild bee, whose honey still makes the rocks of Palestine drop sweetness; and many a flower, especially of deep crimson hue, unfamiliar to us as were some of the constellations in the sky above us. This was evidently a region of the Holy Land from which all its virgin strength and floral glory had not even yet departed. What

must it have been when Solomon sang of the beauty of the rose of Sharon! It is curious to look into the pages of old travellers some centuries back, and to find them writing thus of the same region:—"A most pleasant plain yielding thyme and hyssop, and other fragrant herbs, without tillage or planting, growing so high that they came to the knees of our asses." Forgive us if, under the enthusiasm of first impressions, and with so many sacred associations hanging over the land, we were tempted to quote words which future experiences did something to tone down,—

> "Thy very weeds are beautiful; thy waste
> More rich than other climes' fertility;
> Thy wreck a glory, and thy ruin graced
> With an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced."

In less than three hours from the time of our leaving Ramleh, we found ourselves entering among mountain scenery, and gradually becoming inclosed in a steep narrow glen, up which, with many windings, we were to ascend by a succession of ridges towards Jerusalem. Indeed, almost before we were aware, we were in the "hill country of Judah." As you pass from the plain into the narrowing track, you see on your right hand, about half a mile distant, a scattered fortress almost seeming to bend over a precipice. Its name is Ladron. The natural, and probably the correct, supposition is, that it was originally built to guard the entrance on this important highway to the sacred city. But the same monkish inventiveness which found a home for Joseph and Nicodemus at Ramleh, has pronounced this to be "the castle of the good thief," the house of the penitent malefactor who was crucified with our Lord. Until very recently it was the nest and stronghold of predatory Arabs, admirably situated for purposes of plunder first, and of safety for the robbers afterwards. Pilgrims, in the last age, breathed more freely when they found themselves a few miles beyond this den of thieves without having been "stripped and peeled."

That little town, again, on the left, at the root of the commencing mountain-range, is called "Amwas" or "Emmaus," and we halt and look down upon it for a few moments in order to receive a few cautions against the too ready identifying of places with Scripture names. Even modern travellers of high learning and authority have tasked and strained their ingenuity to prove that this is the very Emmaus to which the two disconsolate disciples were travelling on the memorable afternoon of the day of our Lord's resurrection. The name is all in their favour, and a tradition which can be traced down in unbroken line from the third to the thirteenth century confirms the impression derived from the identity of the name. But the inexorable conditions of the evangelical narrative give the conjecture to the winds, and place it beyond all reasonable doubt that this cannot be the Emmaus of Luke, the scene of that marvellous conversation and gracious self-manifestation by the risen Christ. The village named in the gospel was only sixty furlongs distant from Jerusalem: this is one hundred and sixty by the crow's flight. The two disciples returned to Jerusalem on the same evening. Is it credible that between afternoon and midnight, with an intervening pause, they could have travelled a distance of forty miles? Here, then, is an instance in which both the name and nearly a thousand years of tradition must give way before the stubborn logic of facts. We were being rapidly educated into an unpleasant scepticism about localities.

There cannot be a doubt, however, that that village of Yalo, on the mountain-side towards our left, looks down upon one of the most interesting scenes of Old Testament history. It is the Ajalon of Joshua's great prayer and of the answering miracle, when "the moon stood still in the valley of Ajalon." We were now, therefore, skirting the locality of one of the grandest events in the life of the chosen people. We had not time to diverge from our path and trace from point to point in

the scenery the various details of that great conflict, rout, and slaughter, in which the military strength of the five Canaanitish kings was broken and shivered, and Jehovah himself fought from heaven so visibly and gloriously for Israel. We could only look in upon some points in the vast theatre of that mighty drama. Gibeon still stands, not quite a ruin yet, on a lofty eminence, down whose sides there are the traces of old gardens and broken terraces, where a few olives make an effort to live. Upper Beth-horon is perched upon another height, while Beth-horon the Nether lies down in a valley beneath. The incidents of that great and notable day can be traced in these various places with the most perfect certainty, through the singularly minute exactness of the sacred narrative. The five kings of the Amorites have surrounded Gibeon with a strong army, determined to punish to the utmost its craven people for their desertion to that mysterious power which has come up so suddenly upon their land, and the recollection of whose terrible triumphs at Jericho and Ai is still fresh upon their minds. Joshua, warned of this by the timid and wily Gibeonites, hastens through the night, by a forced march, to Gibeon, and early in the morning falls upon the besiegers by a sudden onslaught which produces universal confusion and dismay. They flee before the conquering Israelites, toil up the steep ascent to the Upper Beth-horon, the confusion and the carnage increasing every moment. On the crest of the village-crowned mountain a new terror awaits them, for, as they still rush onward, the Lord casts down great hailstones from heaven upon them, and more perish by the hailstones than are slain by the children of Israel with the sword. Down they flee into the valley beneath, towards the Nether Beth-horon, more terrified by the dread artillery of heaven than by the pursuing hosts of Israel; and then it is that Joshua, with sword in hand, looking down on the retreating Amorites, and seeing that the day for reaping the awful death-harvest is all too short, speaks

that command in the hearing of Israel, "Sun, stand thou still upon Gibeon; and thou, Moon, in the valley of Ajalon. And the sun stood still, and the moon stayed, until the people had avenged themselves upon their enemies." We cannot determine the *modus* of that magnificent miracle. Can we do this, indeed, in regard to any supernatural work? It is enough for us to know that the laws of nature were so divinely controlled as to produce this astonishing result. "This was the very longest day," says the ever quaint Fuller, "which that climate ever did or shall behold, when time was delivered of twins, two days joined together without any night interposing."

The ascent was every half-hour becoming steeper and the sun hotter, and we were not sorry when our guide told us to halt for our mid-day repast and rest. A piece of carpet was spread for us under a fine old oak-tree, with thick foliage and enormous branches. We began to-day to eat the wild honey, which never failed us during our journeyings in Palestine; and those rich oranges, larger than an infant's head, which Giuseppe had purchased yesterday at the gate of the Jaffa gardens, tasted like nectar. With what skill he cuts them up into thin slices with that long knife drawn from his belt, not allowing one drop of juice to escape. We had noticed before this that he was one-eyed, and we were not long in the country until we observed that this was a very common fact with men of middle age. Indeed, it would be difficult to determine whether the possession of both eyes is the exception or the rule. There are sometimes local causes which so far account for this, as was the case at Ramleh; and the want of skilful surgeons may explain it in not a few other instances. But we soon discovered that there was a cause beyond this, operating always and everywhere, in the terrible conscription for the Sultan's army, which had tempted hundreds thus to maim themselves in order that they might be disqualified for military service. We were told, however, that the unscrupulous Pasha at Jerusalem, determined

not to be outdone, had met one trick with another, and had, some years before, instituted a one-eyed regiment, for admission to which this Cyclopean condition was a necessary qualification!

After a rest of silence, if not of sleep, we spring to our feet refreshed, and are again mounted and on our way. We notice a gradual change in the scenery. We have left many of the wild flowers now behind us; even the trees are becoming stunted and unsocial, though here and there at intervals we recognize the dwarf-oak, the box, and the laurel. Large naked masses of limestone-rock crop out here and there upon the mountain-sides, though all the way up to this point it has been possible to trace, in the ruins of old gardens, in neglected and broken-down terraces, in dead vine-stocks and gnarled olive-roots, with bright patches of verdure, the evidences of a formerly wider culture, the relics of a much more extensive fruitfulness. Our friend Lieutenant Van de Velde mentions, that when he passed through this same region he met with the fragments of old watch-towers standing in places in which there is now nothing to watch, but which must at an earlier period have blossomed as the rose.

And here we may state our conviction, which began to form itself at this part of our journeyings, and which all our subsequent wanderings went to confirm. It was a favourite objection with Voltaire and Bayle, and the able school of infidels of which they were the chief prophets, that this country could never have possessed the fertility and beauty which are ascribed to it in the Scriptures; and that the descriptions of it, not only in the poetry of the Bible, but in its plain histories, are demonstrably gross exaggerations. And we have heard the fainter echoes of these confident assertions in our own times. Our belief is that the exaggeration is all on the side of these writers, and that there is nothing in the condition of modern Palestine to discredit the inspired representations; nay, that it is quite

conceivable that, without any strictly miraculous interposition, under the influence of good laws and industrious intelligent culture, the fruit of general education and sound religion, the land may yet recover all its old and palmy fertility. This is the order which prophecy leads us to expect. "Upon the land of my people shall come up thorns and briers.....*until* the Spirit be poured upon us from on high." The Turkish administration, especially in its remoter provinces, blights and curses everything that it touches. The proverb is almost literally true, that wherever the hoof of a Turkish horse rests, it leaves barrenness behind it. Think of a country in which the poor farmer is obliged to give two-thirds of the whole produce of the land he cultivates to the government, and in which the remaining third is estimated by the rapacious agents of the Pasha, who generally know nothing either of justice or mercy. Competence is dangerous under such a system. The thriving man becomes a mark for robbery and oppression. Is it matter for wonder that, under such a system as this, gardens should have returned to wildernesses, the vine withered, the olive-tree drooped and died, corn-fields have become oozy swamps, fountains once used for irrigation have been choked and sealed up, and hundreds of places which once echoed with the songs of the reaper or of the vintage now heaps of stones, or masses of tangled weeds, or barren rocks! "The old instrument is the same, but it is neither strung with stock, nor played upon with the hand of skilful industry. The rose of Sharon is faded, her leaves lost, and now nothing but the prickles thereof are to be seen." But let labour be protected and fairly and certainly remunerated; let industry be instructed, guided, and stimulated, and how soon would the land begin to smile with abundance, and to put on again her beautiful garments! Could that picture of industry which we have sometimes witnessed among the Waldenses on the slopes of their Cottian Alps, of women carrying baskets of earth on their heads, and spreading

it on the naked rocks from which the rains and melting snows had washed the soil away, in order to afford planting-ground for the young vines, only become common in Palestine, and the energy which it represents be made indigenous there, in how many thousand spots would the wilderness become a fruitful field! Competent judges have affirmed that were the one plain of Esdraelon, which stretches from Cape Carmel to Mount Tabor, a distance of less than thirty miles, to be cultivated according to our Western notions of culture, it would produce sufficient grain to feed all the inhabitants of Palestine. The well-known experience of Mr. Meshullam proves what good farming could evoke from this weary, down-trodden land, and what sleeping life there is in its soil, when, on his experimental farm at Urtas, a little to the southward of Bethlehem, he was rewarded by a rotation of five different crops in one year; and even the peach-stone which he dibbled into the earth grew peaches within the first twelve months.

As we rode on we recognized that peculiar formation of many of the mountains which had been noticed by Richardson and other travellers in a former age, "meeting at their base, but separated at their top, not by pointed acuminations, but more like two round balls placed beside each other." We were now passing through a region which, in the times of that observant traveller, and at a much later period, was the most dangerous for pilgrims in all Palestine, with the one exception of the road down to Jericho, through the presence of that powerful and ferocious brigand, Abu Gosh, who, for fifty years, was the scourge and terror of the whole region, plundering luckless caravans, and not scrupling to send a bullet through the body of a pasha who might venture to intrude into his territory and to question his authority. Those narrow passes and sharp turns in the road, where concealed bandits could quietly wait their prey, and be ready to point the muzzle of a gun to their breast as they moved round the angle of a rock, favoured his

robber-life. That village up on the margin of the wady, with some strong-looking buildings frowning in its centre, was the robber's capital; and the wrecks of his family, returned from long exile, are said to harbour in it still, like Giant Pope in Bunyan, perhaps watching the passing pilgrim, but no longer able to do any mischief: they may grin, but they cannot bite.

To what base uses has that village come; for while the point has not been absolutely proved, it has at least been rendered highly probable, that Kuriet-el-Ainab is the actual Kirjath-jearim of Old Testament history, the place to which the ark of the Lord was brought from Beth-shemesh, and where it rested under the care of a priestly family further up on the same eminence, until it was carried up by David from thence to Jerusalem. During the time in which this sacred symbol of the divine presence tarried in the priest's mountain-home at Kirjath-jearim, the people must have come up to it from all quarters for sacrifice and worship; and now that ancient "house of prayer" for all people had literally been "made a den of thieves."

There are those who favour the conjecture that this is also the true Emmaus of the evangelical narrative; and there would indeed be something pleasing in the coincidence that the little town which for so many centuries before had been the resting-place of the symbol of the divine presence had once at least afforded shelter and hospitality to the risen Redeemer, the incarnate God. If picturesqueness could have anything to do in settling such a question, we should prefer, in harmony with the general opinion of students of sacred topography in Jerusalem, marking Kolonieh as the real gospel-Emmaus, standing a good way up on the wooded slopes of a mountain, with gardens of fruit-trees spreading down to a shady hollow with its little murmuring brook and its old Roman bridge. Its distance from Jerusalem is not inconsistent with the supposition, and its present evidently Roman name only proves that,

at a later period, it was garrisoned for a time by Roman soldiers.

We had severe effort with our now wearied horses before we got quite clear of those narrow passes in which we had been winding and ascending for so many hours. There was one zigzag, rugged, almost precipitous place that nearly worsted us. We had gone over some of the worst passes in the Alps, we had crossed one of the most formidable ridges of the Appenines by moonlight, yet some engineering skill had been expended on those roads; but here the turns were so sharp around the pointed projecting rocks, the beetling precipices beneath so terrible, and the declivities above us which we were required to climb so near to the perpendicular, that our best resource for a little time was to throw the reins upon our horse's neck and to close our eyes. At length we were upon ground which, though bleak in some places and rugged in all, was comparatively level; and we began to breathe freely.

And now we could not doubt that we were passing over ground which was rich at almost every step with Biblical associations. Along this way the procession must have moved bearing the ark of the Lord from Kirjath-jearim to its place within the curtained tabernacle on Mount Zion. The whole region before and behind must have echoed with the glad music of the harp and the psaltery, the clang of the cymbals, and the soft sound of the silver trumpets. "The singers went before, the players on instruments followed after; among them were the damsels playing with timbrels. There is little Benjamin, with their ruler, the princes of Judah and their council, the princes of Zebulun, and the princes of Naphtali." Through long centuries, companies of pilgrims must have journeyed over this lofty table-land on their way to keep the solemn annual feasts, converging towards it from many a wady and glen, their ranks increasing and their songs becoming louder as they drew near to the sacred city. And if Emmaus was some-

where in this quarter, as all seem to believe that it was, then it seems certain that "on that solemn eventide" of which Cowper speaks, the blessed feet of the risen Christ must have trodden hereabouts when he talked with those two disciples,—alternately hoping and fearing, believing and doubting,—in words that made their hearts burn within them; though it is probable that gardens and corn-fields may then have filled the air with fragrance and clothed the landscape with beauty. The Roman legions must have marched along this path to be the instrument of Heaven's holy and awful vengeance against the doomed city whose cup of guilt was full. And in later ages this must have been the course of the brave Crusaders from the far West, ascending under their red-cross banners either to recover Jerusalem to the Christians, or to perish under its walls and be buried in its sacred dust. In a little while, however, we began to give scarcely any heed to scenery or incident. The consciousness had been secretly present to our hearts since the morning, that before sunset we were to look upon the most sacredly interesting place in the world; and now the absorbing thought, as the intervening miles slowly lessened between us and our bourn, was Jerusalem—Jerusalem!

We were not, however, without a brief adventure, that was curiously out of keeping with our state of mind. As we were riding along at a somewhat brisk pace over a comparatively level part of our way, we saw a company of five or six men approaching us from the opposite direction on horseback, and with ample cloaks floating behind them on the breeze. Who were these imposing riders, to whom distance lent so much enchantment? Had they borne lances and carried pennons, they might almost have represented a company of those Crusaders of whom we had been dreaming half-an-hour before. Alas! for sentiment and romance! They turned out to be nothing more than mounted "touters" from the different hotels in Jerusalem, eager to put into our hands their bill of fare, and

to extract from us a promise, which we were slow to give. It was more than a mile before we got rid of this teasing. It was a somewhat ludicrous instance of the occidental wave which is beginning to obliterate the old customs of the East. But the same kind of influence is at work in many other and more serious forms. We have need to make haste if we would catch the old picture of the East entire. The colours are fading, the forms are changing. We are convinced that there are many customs illustrative of Scripture which have yet to be observed and placed on record. No man has yet quite done for Palestine what Mr. Lane has accomplished, in his admirable work, for Egypt.

Our eagerness had now grown into impatience. Surely when we get up to that eminence we shall see Jerusalem! We ascend, and are disappointed; and so it is a second time and a third. Can we really be on the right way? At length we pass on to a rocky plateau, and our range of view is widened. Does that line of bright green in the far distance mark the course of the Jordan? It does; and that shining strip of water must be the mysterious Dead Sea, and that lofty wall of green beyond must be the mountains of Moab. We proceed a few paces onward, and Jerusalem is almost at our feet. First, green Olivet appears, with a half-ruined monastery on its summit, and dotted all over with olive-trees. Those are the old walls of the holy city. Behold, rising high above them, is the domed Mosque of Omar, and that old black structure nearer is the Tower of David. See what a glory the western sun is shedding upon the venerable city and down into that deep valley of Hinnom! The dream of a life was realized. We reined in our horse, and gazed mutely. We confess to have felt so solemn that we refused to speak or to be spoken to by others; just as we have sometimes felt when entering a death-chamber where a spirit had just passed away to heaven, and nothing but the cold beloved dust remained.

Then, as we descended slowly on the bright green-sward, a succession of visions passed rapidly before our mind.

In imagination we saw the city in its palmy days, when Solomon was its king. The Temple was built and finished and stood on Mount Moriah "very magnifical," the work of a united religious people—a very poem in stone. The glory of the Lord had descended and taken visible possession of it, and the king, with his white-robed priests and crowding multitudes, had sung high praise and holy welcome to the heavenly King, the Divine Inhabitant. Ages passed, and then we imagined proud Sennacherib's army of Assyrians compassing the city round about, demanding submission and entrance, or assuring the people of speedy bondage and destruction in the event of refusal. Hezekiah's prayer conquers when the besieged people are at their wit's end; and one of God's soldiers, an angel from heaven, on one night seals in a fatal death-sleep 185,000 of the beleaguering army which had defied the living God. Next, we thought of Nehemiah in later ages walking by moonlight amidst its ruined walls and broken gates, hastening to arouse and unite the dispirited and divided people; and then, under his patriotic, earnest leadership, transfusing his soul, as it were, into the whole nation, the wall rising from day to day like a thing of life, its gates set up, and national existence and national hope restored. Then centuries elapsed again, and we beheld the Son of God walking and teaching in its streets and places of public concourse, and working miracles at its Temple-gates, his earthly life closed by the great events of his crucifixion on Calvary, his resurrection and ascension. And, last of all, the vision passed before us of the armies of the Roman Titus surrounding the guilty city, the protracted siege, the terrible scenes of carnage, the burning Temple, the ploughshare carried through its foundations, and the remnant of the people that had escaped the sword and the fire scattered to all the winds of heaven, to become the mocking, and the proverb, and the by-word of all the

nations of the earth. The thought, however, which stood present and prominent in our mind as we looked down from the heights of the Jaffa road was, that somewhere within the range of our vision at that moment, those great events had occurred which had brought redemption to our world! Calvary was near, and the rocky grave where angels watched, and the green spot from which Jesus had ascended through that sky to heaven!

But it is remarkable what rude shocks one's meditations experience when travelling in Palestine. No sooner had we reached the Jaffa gate by which we were to enter this wondrous city, which had occupied the waking dreams of a lifetime, than we were stopped by the jabbering of custom-house officers eager for bribes, and kept waiting long under a broiling sun until their voracity was satisfied. We then descended through steep, narrow streets, on loose flinty stones, on which it was next to impossible for our horse to find solid footing; and after passing under some gloomy arcades, into which the sunlight never penetrates, landed at the door of a little inn with scarcely a window on its outside wall, and which had very much the look of a prison. It was enough. We were in Jerusalem.

V.

Modern Jerusalem.

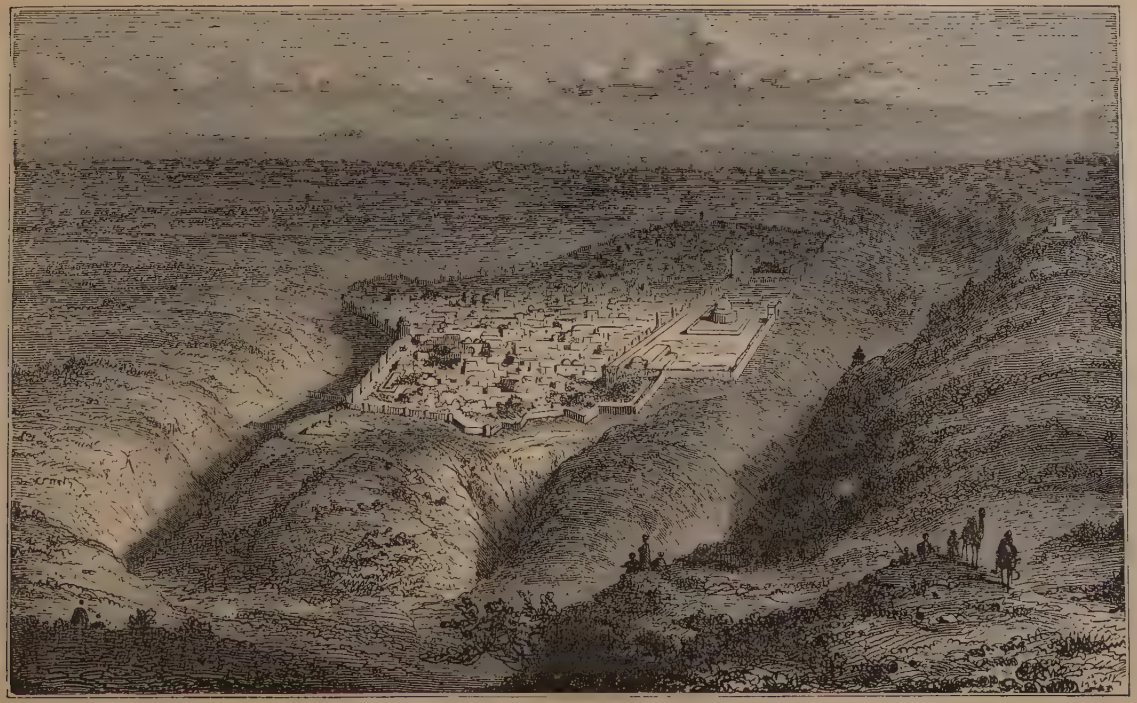
Mount Olivet by moonlight—The wall of Jerusalem—Its principal gates—The Dung-gate—[2 Chron. xxix. 16]—*The Golden-gate—Valleys of Jehoshaphat, Hinnom, and Gihon—Natural strength of the ancient city—Circle of mountains, inner and outer* [Ps. cxxv. 2]—*Principal quarters—Rigid distinctions—Probable number of inhabitants—The Jews in Jerusalem* [Ps. cii. 14]—*Jewish synagogues* [Ps. cxxxvii.]—*Order of worship* [Luke iv. 16–20]—*Nationalities* [Acts vi. 9]—*The sparrow and the swallow* [Ps. lxxxiv. 3]—*Bishop Gobat—A Sabbath on Mount Zion—An evening in the bishop's house* [Ps. lxxii. 16]—*The Prussian deaconesses—Estimate of Bishop Gobat's labours—Evangelical agencies for Palestine—Activity of the Jesuits—Challenge by Dr. Barclay to Monsignor Capel—Tables d'hôte—Scenes of proselytism—How the inhabitants are supported—Impoverished look of the city—The glory departed* [Jer. xxvi. 18; Micah iii. 12]—*Strange police regulation: Lanterns by night—News of robbery outside the walls—Miserable look of the encampment and of the victims—The Jews' Wailing-place* [Luke xiii. 35]—*Scene on the Passover week* [Lam. ii. 1; iv. 1]—*Rabbi Akiba—Light from the bosom of darkness* [Isa. xxxvii. 31; Rom. xi. 15, 23].

FROM the upper room of our little inn, in which we were accustomed to take our quiet meals, we looked directly out on Mount Olivet dotted with its olive-trees, and could easily trace the various paths across or around the mountain to Bethany. We remember that on the evening of our arrival, when the moon was out in the cloudless sky, we ascended by an outside stair to the flat roof over the upper chamber, and looked down upon the silent city, with its white domes and tall, lance-like minarets, its tall cypresses and softened ruins, while Olivet gradually concentrated our notice with a fascination that we could not resist. We pictured to ourselves Him who had so often gone out to it, and continued all night in prayer to God, retiring into one of those quiet recesses, or

bending beneath one of those shady olive-trees; and we felt how willingly, had he yet been there, we could have gone out and "ministered unto him," and kissed his blessed feet. Everything was yet subdued and undefined to us in the witchery of the moonlight, and we knew how very much of the charm would be broken when, on the morrow, we looked out upon the modern city in broad daylight. But still, no harsh reality could take from us the satisfaction of knowing that within a circle of less than one and a half miles from the spot on which we were then standing, the most important events in the history of our race had occurred—events whose moral influences, it was probable, reached to the extremest point of the intelligent universe; that here had been the most frequent meeting-place between Earth and Heaven; and therefore we could sympathize to the full with those words of Arnold, and even go beyond them: "Of earthly sights, Rome ranks as the third; Athens and Jerusalem are the other two: the three people of God's election—two for things temporal, and one for things eternal."

We shall keep within the gates of the city in our present chapter, and shall endeavour to convey to our readers our impressions of the aspect and condition of the Jerusalem of our own times, as we so recently saw it; reserving for another chapter our notices of modern excavations, and of those many objects of Biblical and antiquarian interest, some of which are to be found within the city itself, and more of which immediately rise before us when we pass beyond its walls.

Every one is aware that modern Jerusalem is surrounded by a wall, varying in height at different places from twenty-five to fifty feet, according to the natural elevation or depression of the ground, and having towers, battlements, and loopholes at regular intervals, with gates that are constantly guarded, and regularly closed at sunset. The wall is so broad on the top in many places that it is easy to stand or walk on it, as we have sometimes done, without danger or giddiness. Though it is



BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF JERUSALEM.

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not of sufficient strength to stand the shock of modern artillery, but would be shattered and demolished in a few hours by a well-directed fire from the sides of Olivet or the rising ground of Scopus, it is sufficient for guarding the city from the Bedouin robber, the principal enemy whom the inhabitants, in common circumstances, have cause to fear.

There are four gates, through which there is a constant thoroughfare, and which look, with considerable exactness, towards the cardinal points. Two of these are,—the Jaffa-gate on the west, and the Damascus-gate on the north, which receive their names from the cities to which the roads that start from them conduct. The other two are, St. Stephen's-gate on the east —so named from a tradition that the first Christian martyr suffered in its neighbourhood ; and the gate of Zion on the south, because it stands on a part of that eminence. There are other gates, however, which still continue in partial use, such as the Dung-gate, through whose comparatively narrow entrance we recollect having found our way from outside the wall to the Jews' Wailing-place. The offal and rubbish of the city are still carried out by this gate, and tumbled into a vast heap, which finds its way down into the valley of the Kidron, far beneath ; so that the old practice remains, which we can trace back to the times of Hezekiah, when, on occasion of his cleansing the Temple from its filth, its idolatrous symbols, and its idols, these were brought forth by the same gate, and hurled down, it is probable, from the same point, to mingle with "the offscourings of all things."

The wall, though old according to our Western notions of age, is not of extraordinary antiquity, having been built by Saladin in the sixteenth century. But when one examines it in detail and with some attention, and observes its patched look in many parts, and the enormous stones which here and there diversify the structure—some of them bearing the certain marks of a much earlier masonry, and evidently not in their original places—it is

impossible to doubt that the material of Nehemiah's wall, and even of older defences, mingles with those existing walls and towers. There is one vast marble stone laid transversely, and protruding from that portion of the wall immediately above the now built up "Golden-gate," in respect to which the Mohammedans have the grotesque prediction that their prophet is to sit on it on the day of judgment, when the world is gathered for its last great ordeal in the valley of Jehoshaphat beneath. There are many reasons for believing that the present wall, in by far the larger part of its circuit, follows in the line of older defences. In many places it stands as near to the precipitous edge of the encircling valleys as the nature of the ground will admit; and Lieutenant Van de Velde was able to trace, in some parts, the groove in the rock from which the first tier of stones had been partially dislodged by the plough of Terentius Rufus, and in which they had been replaced by later builders. But the ruins of houses still occasionally discovered make it evident that the earlier wall had extended considerably further towards the north-west; while it is certain that Ophel, a part of Mount Moriah, and the southern extremity of Zion, both of which now stand outside the wall, formed part of the city down beyond the latest period of Biblical history.

Except in its northern direction, where it is connected by a level tract with the rising ground beyond it, Jerusalem is encompassed by three valleys or gorges, in some places of extraordinary depth: that of Jehoshaphat on the east, at the bottom of which is the bed of the Kidron, now only known as a winter torrent, carrying down the refuse of the city into the Dead Sea; that of Hinnom on the south, intersecting the valley of Jehoshaphat at its deepest point, beneath the shadow of the village of Siloam which hangs like an eagle's nest on the rock above; and that of Gihon on the west, commencing near the Jaffa-gate, and gradually merging and deepening into that of Hinnom. There are points on the side of those dark ravines from

which it makes one giddy to look down even now: what must have been the effect when the descent was more immediate and terribly precipitous, and before those valleys had gathered into them the accumulated débris of two millenniums? It is recorded that at that point, on the north of the city, where there is no natural ravine, the defences had been made so strong by art, as, with a brave and united people behind them, to be nearly impregnable. Even the proud Sennacherib, it is evident, was secretly reluctant to measure the strength of his Assyrian host against such munitions. What an inspiriting sight must it have been to a patriotic Hebrew in Jerusalem's palmy days, when "walking about Zion, and going round about her," he considered her palaces and marked well her bulwarks! And when we think of this city in the centre of Judah, far up in her mountain region, away from sea-ports, guarded by lofty walls, encircled by deep ravines, and her besiegers having no more formidable instruments and engines of assault than the battering-ram and the catapult, we can understand how she should so often have been able to defy and to weary out some of the mightiest forces of the Old World; and how, when even Rome sent forth against her all the might of her imperial strength, the experience of her astonishing power of resistance, then increased in many places by a triple wall, should have drawn from Titus the acknowledgment that he could never have succeeded in conquering a city so defended, except by the supernatural help of the gods!

Beyond these gorges again, but quite near, there is a circle of hills, not rising in frowning eminences and lofty peaks, and appearing to overtop and hem in the ancient city, but rather seeming to form a respectful guard around a monarch. That hill on the north rising in quiet beauty is Scopus, from which Titus obtained his first admiring view of Jerusalem. Who can fail to recognize in the triple-topped, dark-robed eminence on the east the Mount of Olives? while those wilder cliffs which bound the city on the south and west are the Hill of Evil

Counsel and the ridge of Wady Beit Hanîna. At a further distance the eye can trace a second and much bolder mountain circle, in which portions of the hill country of Judah and some of the nearest summits of Samaria come in to fill up the picture, making you see how grandly appropriate is that comparison in the psalm: "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people from henceforth even for ever."

Modern Jerusalem is divided into four principal quarters: the Mohammedan, the Jewish, the Greek, and the Latin; the names of the quarters indicating that the division is regulated by the creed or religion of the different dwellers in the city. Unquestionably there is no other spot on the earth on which antagonist faiths are so crowded upon each other and yet are separated by so sharp a division. Go into one part of the city, and you will hear the muezzin-cry ringing out from some minaret, calling the Moslem to prayer. Pass into another, and you will meet with rosaries, and crucifixes, images of the Virgin, and rude pictures of the Madonna and her Child. Wander next to that eastern portion of Mount Zion which is inclosed within the city walls, and which looks over upon Moriah, and you will find it crowded with synagogues, and the white-bearded Hebrew with those indelible typical features, cherishing an ancient worship which has lingered around the same spot for three thousand years, and which refuses to amalgamate with any other. The consequence is, that there are three distinct sacred days observed in the different quarters of Jerusalem every week —the Mohammedan Sabbath on Friday, the Jewish on Saturday, and the Christian on the first day of the week. The manner of life of these different classes of religionists, as well as their mutual animosities, have rendered these local separations expedient in Jerusalem, if anywhere. We believe that the division is, on the whole, very rigidly observed; and it has even been affirmed, though probably with a considerable touch of

satire, that the very dogs of the various quarters are jealous against the intrusion of strange dogs from any of the other quarters, and resent it after their own dog fashion.

The population of modern Jerusalem has been very differently estimated,—and no doubt it increases by some thousands at the season of the annual religious feasts,—but 18,000 appears to be the most probable average population; and while the Mohammedans are the masters, the Jews form the decided majority, being, it is likely, not far short of 8000. They come in a constant stream from every part of the world, many of them on pilgrimages, by which they hope to acquire a large fund of merit, and then return again to their native country; the greater number that they may die in the city of their fathers, and obtain the most cherished wish of their heart by being buried on Mount Olivet; and it is remarkable that they cling with a strange preference to that part of the city which is nearest the site of their ancient Temple, as if they still "took pleasure in its stones, and its very dust were dear to them." They are fond of inscribing touching passages from the Old Testament upon the most conspicuous places in their synagogues, such as that in the Hundred and Thirty-seventh Psalm: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept when we remembered Zion. We hanged our harps upon the willows in the midst thereof.....If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." The Jerusalem synagogues, however, are not adorned like many of those in our European capitals, such as we have seen at Leghorn and Frankfort, probably in order to avoid tempting the cupidity of unscrupulous Moslem rulers. It is indeed remarkable in how many ways the Jews keep hold of their country as with a trembling hand, and are reluctant to let go the traces and the records of a glorious past. At a later period we visited with a learned Jew remote

mountain villages in Palestine, far out of the common track of travellers, which contained the tombs of old rabbins and learned men, some of them going back even beyond the Christian era, and we found that lamps were kept burning before those tombs night and day. What an amazing tenacity of life there is alike in the people and their faith!

We visited several of their synagogues, and had brief conversations with some of their chief men; and three things particularly struck us as shedding incidental light upon the Scriptures. Thus, it was curious to notice the close resemblance between the order of religious service in those Jerusalem synagogues in our own days, and that which is described in Luke's Gospel as having been observed in the synagogue at Nazareth on that memorable occasion when our Lord was invited to become the teacher. The correspondence was, in fact, complete at every point, as if the thing had remained stereotyped down through all the eighteen centuries. A roll of one of the books of the Old Testament was carried by a servant from a recess in the wall and put into the hands of the president or reader, who was elevated on a platform in the centre of the synagogue. While the Scripture for the day was being recited, both the reader himself and all the congregation stood up; but at the close of the reading all the people took their seats, and the reader, seated also, proceeded with his mingled exposition and exhortation.

It was scarcely less interesting to observe that the attendance of the Jews on the different synagogues was regulated by the countries to which they owed their birth. Jews from the coasts of Africa and from the south of Europe usually frequented one synagogue; German and Polish Jews were to be found in another; and so it was with other nationalities. But when we turn to the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles we find the same state of things existing in Jerusalem at the beginning of Christianity. Among those who disputed with the youthful

Stephen, when "his face shown like the face of an angel," were some from the synagogue of the Libertines—that is, freedmen from Rome and other parts of Italy; some from the synagogue of the Cyrenians and Alexandrians—that is, Jews from Northern Africa; and others from the synagogue of Cilicia and the neighbouring provinces—that is, Asiatic Jews.

We confess to having been even a good deal impressed by noticing that the sparrow and the swallow had free ingress into the synagogues, and that they were allowed to build their nests in convenient nooks in those sacred houses. We could hear their busy twittering during every lull in the service. No doubt, the respect for birds which prevails all over the East may so far account for this; but probably the chief explanation is to be found in those words of the psalm, which have given those creatures a kind of right of sanctuary in the synagogue: "Yea, the sparrow hath found an house, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young, even thine own altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God."

But while false religions and greatly corrupted forms of the true sadly predominate in modern Jerusalem, there is even there, in the birth-place of Christianity, a Christian worship with much of the simplicity and life of primitive times. To us it was indeed a privilege and a joy, on the only Sabbath that we spent in Jerusalem, literally to ascend Mount Zion, and to worship twice in the church of the excellent Bishop Gobat. His beautiful and spacious place of worship stands on the very crest of the Hill of Zion, almost over against the dark and massive ancient structure known as the Tower of David. We confess to our having experienced emotions of special sacredness when we entered Zion's gates and celebrated the Lord's-day, which is the memorial of our Lord's resurrection, not very far from the spot where he had risen from the dead. The form of worship was so simple that it could not have offended even the most rigid Presbyterian: the preaching was admirably pro-

nounced on the grand cardinal truths of our religion; it abounded, in fact, in those very truths which Peter had proclaimed in the neighbouring upper room on the first Pentecost after the Ascension. That was a Sabbath so solemn in its experiences, and so invigorating to faith, that we could almost wish to remember it in heaven. And yet the enjoyment was only some degrees less when we were called to spend a later evening of the same week in Christian exercises and intercourse with the good bishop and his fellow-labourers in Christian work for Jerusalem and Palestine. We were taken by surprise when, with genial kindness and liberality, the venerable man put the Bible into our hands, and invited us to conduct the religious services. The Psalms of David were sung on David's own chosen mountain; the Scriptures were read; earnest prayers were offered. We had heard of a Sabbath school containing more than eighty scholars, many of them the children of Jews, which was held under that very roof; and so we sang in hope those words of the great missionary psalm: "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth." Those men around us needed much to be encouraged and sustained by prayer, for they were working in a singularly hard and beaten soil, among a people that were "twice dead, plucked up by the roots."

Few Christian workers in Jerusalem more interested us than the Prussian deaconesses from the neighbouring hospital and school outside the gates, who were so active in ministering to the distressed, and in training the young to habits of industry and in the knowledge of religion. The lady superior of the institution was of the bishop's party; and she deeply impressed us by the evidence which her conversation gave of calm energy, shrewd practical wisdom, and lofty devotedness. Indeed, whenever we met with these admirable women in the sea-board cities of Northern Africa and of Western Asia, as in Alexandria

and Smyrna, the conviction deepened in our mind that they were doing a great though comparatively noiseless work; hiding the little leaven in the meal, which was to help much in leavening the whole lump.

Bishop Gobat's labours, though not without good fruit in Jerusalem, extend over Palestine,—at least as far north as Nazareth, where his son-in-law, Mr. Zeller, is the centre of an effective Christian agency; and the eighteen schools which he has planted in its towns and villages make his influence felt and his name honoured all over the ancient land. These Protestant schools stimulate even the most supine; in proof of which we recollect the bishop's statement, that wherever he established a school two others were not long in springing up, the one erected by the Roman Catholics, and the other by the Mohammedans—a clear enough indication that these antagonist con munities dread the school as the very right arm of Protestantism. Indeed, were we asked to specify the principal agencies that are acting with appreciable influence on those Bible lands, and promising to be the means of their gradual regeneration, we should name those which are conducted by Bishop Gobat from his Jerusalem centre, and those which are managed by the excellent staff of American missionaries in Beyrout, who have already extended their stations as far as Tyre and Sidon, and are operating with such persevering energy upon the various branches of the Eastern Churches that spread themselves everywhere over the slopes of Lebanon. These, along with those Syrian schools planted by that devoted woman, the late Mrs. Bowen Thomson, the schools of the Saleeby brothers, and the quiet labours of a few medical missionaries and some isolated evangelists specially sent out from England to gather in "the dispersed of Israel," make up the sum of evangelistic forces that are working to bring back this native land of the gospel to its earlier and better faith.

Great additional value is to be attached to the labours of

Bishop Gobat and his assistants in Jerusalem, on account of the good influence which they exert over European and American visitors to the East. These are increasing in number every year; and a ministry such as that which is maintained in the bishop's church cannot fail to be widely effective, both in the form of attraction and of restraint. This was never more needed than it is now in Jerusalem, not only because of the confessedly deteriorating influence of travel upon the religious life, but also because Jesuitism is most active there in seeking to draw away ill-informed and unwary Protestants from the faith. A certain "Monsignor," whose portrait has been given with an almost cruel accuracy of appreciation by Mr. Disraeli in his "Lothair," and who was leading about his most brilliant prize and pervert everywhere when we were in Jerusalem, was spreading his nets and using his wiles in every direction. In a new Latin church, which had just been completed, in the "Via Dolorosa," he was exercising his oratory in plausible addresses, in which all the worst points of Popery were cast into the shade, and the differences between the Roman Catholic and the Protestant communions so toned down as to make the passage from the one to the other seem easy. And at *tables d'hôte* there was the same ceaseless proselytism constantly played off upon persons, many of whom, it is probable, had never given five minutes of serious thought to the mighty questions which produced the Reformation, and some of whom were as easily caught in the Jesuit's silken nets as the fly in the web of the spider. As it was impossible to storm the propagandist in his hotel, Dr. Barclay, the learned missionary, challenged him, in a very courteous epistle, to a public debate on the chief points of controversy with the Protestants. We promised to remain a week in Jerusalem, and share in the discussion. But the *table d'hôte* was a much safer and more congenial field than the open platform; and the challenge was declined. We shall meet with this personage again.

PRINCIPAL STREET IN JERUSALEM.

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The many-coloured population of modern Jerusalem, with its many antagonist faiths, is far from sufficient to occupy the space which is inclosed within its walls. The impression which our every survey of it left upon our mind was that of a shrivelled old man, who had long ago seen better days, but who had somehow shrunken grievously within his dress. Its streets are in many places arcaded and gloomy, so narrow that it is with some difficulty that two loaded camels can pass each other, and rough almost as a mountain-path; and its houses with so few windows fronting to the street, that they unpleasantly remind you of a prison. There are no manufactures in Jerusalem, unless we dignify with this name the carving of beads, crosses, and shells, and the making of staves, paper-cutters, pin-cushions, and boxes from the wood of the olive or the terebinth brought from Olivet or the Jordan, or from some old gnarled vine-stock found in some of the gardens at Bethany, and which are bought in great numbers by visitors and pilgrims. These were all made in public view; and it was curious to notice how much in the primitive artizanship of the East the naked feet, and especially the toes, helped the hands, and in their own slow way did the work of more than one of our Western instruments.

We often found difficulty in understanding how it was possible for even those 18,000 inhabitants to find sustenance. But the greater number of the Jews are subsidized by their richer brethren in other lands. The various convents, though often plundered, are rich still, and circulate money; and the pilgrim weeks are Jerusalem's harvest for the year. You look in vain for streets crowded with a busy population. Often you will meet with only one passenger, but probably that one man will be a picture. Perhaps he is an Armenian with lofty bearing, in garments of fine cloth or rich silk; or a common Arab in his simple shirt of blue cotton; or a wild Bedouin with dark, shaggy locks and sheep-skin coat. Give him a wide berth to

move in, for in that coat and woolly burnouse he "feeds a colony." There are other eyes upon him than yours. He has been seeking to exchange English gold or "napoleons" in one of those shops, and suspicion is up that he has been concerned in the last robbery down towards the Jordan.

The same impression is produced by a general glance at the modern city from the flat roof of the bishop's house, which stands on one of the most elevated positions in Jerusalem. We cannot remember to have seen a single new house in course of erection. There were heaps of ruins in many places. It was not unusual for the Arab to pitch his tent on bare places within the walls, just as gipsies do on one of our own commons. Several wide spaces were overgrown with rank weeds, or made impassable by tangled thickets of the enormous cactus. We saw a ploughed field with brairded corn sprouting on it, on Mount Zion. The words of Micah, which received their first fulfilment in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, lay spread out accomplished before our eyes: "Therefore shall Zion for your sake be plowed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the house as the high places of the forest." How different from the times when, at a Passover or a Pentecost, the very roofs of the houses accommodated myriads of strangers, and many, unable to find a dwelling in the crowded city, pitched their tents on the neighbouring Olivet, and echoed back to Jerusalem the nightly praise; and when, in the words of that striking hyperbole, "King Solomon made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones." It is impossible, indeed, to write of the modern city, with the background of Old Testament pictures rising in the memory, and not to fall into the strain of Heber's plaintive ode:—

> "Reft of thy sons, amidst thy foes forlorn,
> Mourn, widowed Queen! forgotten Zion, mourn.
> Is this thy place, sad city, this thy throne,
> Where the wild desert rears its craggy stone?"

We may mention as a remarkable feature in the police regu-

lations of modern Jerusalem, that as it is not lighted at night, every person going out into the streets after sunset is required to have a lamp or lantern carried before him, as we remember having been obliged to do when going to an evening meeting in the house of the Protestant bishop. If you are found without a lantern, you are carried off without compunction to prison for the night—a kind of gratis accommodation intensely to be deprecated; but should you carry a lantern and be robbed, you have then recourse against the public authorities for compensation. There is advantage in the arrangement entirely apart from this latter condition, as the lantern saves you from stumbling over the many homeless dogs, and sometimes even poor homeless men, that seek a bed in the dark, arched streets. The security for person and property is in this way very considerable within the walls of the city; but should you remain outside the gates after nightfall, all security is gone. We have seen flocks of goats and sheep regularly brought in at sunset from browsing on the neighbouring mountain slopes, and carefully folded within the city. One morning, while we were sitting at breakfast, our new dragoman entered and announced to us, with an unmistakable twinkle of satisfaction in his eye, that a party of more than thirty persons, who had encamped outside the walls, but within fifty yards of St. Stephen's-gate, had been robbed at midnight. They were all English, and imagining themselves to be safe so near the city, had rashly dispensed with Arab protection. Our dragoman evidently thought, though he did not venture to say so to us, that they had been rightly served for disregarding old prescriptive privileges. We hastened down to the encampment with the intention of offering sympathy and help. We found the places all around the tents littered with trunks and portmanteaus that had been ripped open with enormous knives and swords, by dexterous thieves who had done it all without awakening one of their victims; and money, jewels, and ornaments amissing to the value of five

hundred pounds. Our mortified fellow-countrymen did not show the amiable side of their character on the occasion, but were in the worst possible humour.

We have restricted our notices in this chapter to modern Jerusalem, and there is one scene which comes under this description, though it carries our thoughts far back into the past—the Wailing-place of the Jews. We were without a guide, but following in the steps of an aged Israelite, with a well-worn Hebrew Bible in his hand, we were not long in reaching the spot. Passing by a narrow path, through the midst of a dense thicket of prickly pears, we came to a very ancient wall with an open space before it, and with a few wild flowers growing here and there between the joints of its enormous stones, which the Jews believe to be a preserved fragment of their old Temple-wall. It happened to be the Friday of their Passover-week, and the number of Jews assembled was unusually great, probably between eighty and one hundred—of every age, from the old white-bearded patriarch with shrivelled features and piping voice, to the beautiful melancholy boy of twelve. It was a touching sight. After the lapse of eighteen dreary centuries, Israel, represented there from almost every country in the world, was weeping over her ruined Temple, her ruined city, her ruined Church, her people scattered and peeled. On that neighbouring Olivet, long ago, One had wept and prophetically said, "Behold, your house is left unto you desolate;" and the words had come ringing down as a funeral knell through all those intervening ages. Some of their number were reading aloud out of the Book of Deuteronomy or the Lamentations of Jeremiah. Often there were low murmurs and sobs; some would approach the wall as if to embrace it; others would actually kiss its ancient stones. And then at intervals, when some touching passage from Jeremiah was read, such as, "How hath the Lord covered the daughter of Zion with a cloud in his anger, and cast down from heaven unto the earth the beauty of Israel;" or, "How is the

gold become dim! How is the most fine gold changed," the sorrow rose in a loud and prolonged wail to the skies. We knew that those poor mourners were mistaken, and that there was the one blessed fact of a crucified and risen Saviour, which, if they would only believe, would in a moment give them the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. But their sorrow was real, and their cries at times as one that mourneth for an only son; and therefore let us think of them gently, or, if we blame them, as we must, let us remember how much the unchristian treatment they have so often received from Christians, and the idolatry they have seen mingled with all the Christianity that many of them ever witnessed, have done to thicken the veil that is over their mental eyes. We acknowledge that we had never been so impressed with the deep humiliation of the Jews, as when we thus saw them weeping as down-trodden strangers in their own Jerusalem, and beholding in that Mosque of Omar, not far off, "mockery sitting on their own Salem's towers." And yet it was possible to gather comfort respecting Israel even from that spectacle. If the dark side of the prophecy has been thus terribly fulfilled, shall not the bright side be as gloriously accomplished? The Talmud relates how one Rabbi Akiba smiled when others wept, at seeing a fox come out of the Holy of Holies. This verified prophecy, and it made him look with the more certainty for the fulfilment of prophecies of good things to come. And so at that very Wailing-place we could take out our Scriptures and read in hope: "The remnant that is escaped of the house of Judah shall yet again take root downward, and bear fruit upward;" "If the casting away of them be the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead?.....And they also, if they abide not in unbelief, shall be graffed in: for God is able to graff them in again." Our heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

VI.

More about Jerusalem.

Incredible traditions—The Empress Helena and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre—The Latin Easter—Visit to the church—Scenes at the entrance—Passing the Turkish guards—The stone of unction—Different portions of the structure—Young priests as guides—Piling up of wonders—Traditional Calvary—The rent rock—Description of the empty sepulchre—One of the worshippers—Sentiment and superstition—The various scenes of the passion enacted—Turkish soldiers keeping order—Plaintive music—Procession—Life-like image of Christ crucified—Dramatic sermon—The taking down from the cross—Monsignor Capel exhorting Protestant heretics—Procession from Calvary to the sepulchre—Influence of the spectacle—Greek Easter as described by others—Does this church contain the real scenes of the crucifixion and the resurrection?—Reasons for doubting, topographical and historical—Wisdom of Providence in this uncertainty—Visit to the lepers' tents—Hours in Gethsemane.

THE objects within the walls of Jerusalem that can be identified with certainty as of Biblical interest, might almost be counted on the fingers of our two hands. The remark is likely to be disappointing; but it is better to bow at once before the stern fact, than to incur the worse disappointment of having to give up rashly-formed and romantic beliefs.

No doubt, if you will abandon yourself to unquestioning sentiment and easy credulity, there are monkish guides who will hang a tradition on the corner of every street, and make the very stones in the walls vocal with sacred memories. They will even show you the house where Dives lived, and the spot where poor Lazarus lay; they will conduct you to a modern Turkish barrack in the Via Dolorosa, and assure you that this is the old palace of Pontius Pilate; they will point you to a mark in the wall of the same street, which was made by the

cross of Jesus when he bent beneath his burden and it was transferred to the willing shoulders of Simon the Cyrenian; and if your credulity does not yet seem strained to breaking, they will venture to lead you to the roosting-place where the cock crew that brought Peter's sin to his remembrance. All these, and twenty other "puerilities" and "incredibilities," are seen to be utterly worthless, and unreal as the baseless fabric of a vision, in the presence of the simple fact, to which both Josephus and the elder Pliny bear witness, that "within the first Christian century the Romans so levelled to the ground the whole circuit of the city, that, with the exception of three towers left to exhibit the greatness of the Roman prowess in destroying it, it presented to a stranger no token of its ever having been inhabited; and this most renowned city, not only of Judea, but of the East, had become a funeral pile." The structures of modern Jerusalem are built upon the accumulated ruins of eighteen hundred years; and to find the Jerusalem of our Lord's times you must dig down to fifty, and sometimes even to eighty, feet beneath the present surface. It is not without a good deal of lingering regret that one yields himself up to the consequences of such details, and allows them to sweep away what it would have been so much more agreeable to retain. When we were conducted, for instance, to the spacious apartment now called the "Cænaculum," we should have liked to believe that it was the actual upper room in which our Lord observed his last Passover with his disciples and instituted the Lord's Supper, and in which soon afterwards the great Pentecostal effusion took place with its cloven tongues of fire and its glorious Spirit-baptisms. We could have said to modern criticism, with its iron hand making such rude work with the ivy and the flowers, "At least, spare us this." But it would not do. Not only the facts we have named, but the architectural style of the edifice, made us feel that this tradition must go with the others.

But there is one place, at least, in Jerusalem, which it would be unreasonable to set aside after this summary fashion. About the year 300, the Empress Helena, the aged mother of Constantine, believing that she had discovered both the Calvary where our Lord was crucified and the rocky tomb in which he was buried, and from which he rose again on the third day, built a church within which she inclosed both these sacred spots, and which continues to be known to this day as "the Church of the Holy Sepulchre." When the original building on which the venerable Empress had expended so much of her enthusiasm and treasure had nearly perished through decay and violence, it was rebuilt on the same site by the Crusaders; and though a large portion of it was destroyed by fire near the beginning of the present century, it was speedily restored, and continues to occupy the same spot as it did fifteen long centuries ago. During all those intervening ages, the eye of nearly all Christendom has been turned to it, in the sincere belief that it enshrines and protects the actual scenes of our Redeemer's crucifixion and resurrection. When it passed for a time into the hands of the Moslem, the heart of Christian Europe was stirred and its own best blood shed for its recovery; even in our matter-of-fact days, the contest of rival powers for the honour of protecting it had something to do with the origination of the Crimean War; while every year, thousands of pilgrims, with much toil and sacrifice, come from every quarter of the earth to this world-renowned sanctuary, that they may gaze, and weep, and wonder, and worship on those very spots where the redemption of man was accomplished.

We reserve the question of the veritable genuineness of these spots for a later portion of our chapter, that we may first look upon the scenes which are meanwhile being enacted within its walls. This may help to reconcile us to the conclusion to which it is not impossible that we may be forced. It so happened that the week spent by us in Jerusalem was the week of the Latin

Easter, which gave us an opportunity of witnessing scenes within this venerable edifice that filled us with astonishment, shame, and sorrow, but out of which, we are convinced, lessons of no little value may be evolved.

You approach the Church of the Holy Sepulchre through an open court surrounded on almost every side by miserable-looking convents. There is a noisy traffic going on in the court, in coloured beads, fans, spices, carved shells, oil of roses, and sandal-wood, all of which have been made doubly precious by having been taken into the church and made sacred by a priestly benediction. There are sharp-eyed money-changers also in quiet corners; while here and there the halt, the maimed, and the blind are calling piteously for alms. The front, though sombre, and made darker by the shadow of the neighbouring convents, is imposing and picturesque. One of its two doors is built up, and has been in this state since the Crusades. Over the doorway there is a somewhat defaced representation of the triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem. A company of coarse and dirty Turkish soldiers are guarding the door, which is not yet opened; and they show the insolent and contemptuous bearing of those who know themselves to be masters. At length, the door is slowly opened; and dropping into their foul hands the prescribed "paras," we pass with strangely solemn feelings within the sacred house.

We thought of the many generations of pilgrims from every nation under heaven that had streamed through that gate; and, not least, of those mailed Crusaders who bore in their bosoms such a mixture of romance and religion, kneeling on that pavement with the consciousness of having won back "the precious tomb, their haven of salvation," as a glorious prize from the Unbeliever's grasp. The first object that arrested our attention was a large stone slab curiously streaked with veins of red, called "the stone of unction," which is said to be the stone on which the body of our Redeemer was laid after it had been

taken down from the cross, for the purpose of being washed and wrapped in spices; and several pilgrims, as we passed, were bending down and kissing it with great reverence. Parts of the vast structure were portioned off as chapels or sanctuaries for the different Churches—the Greek, the Latin, the Armenian, the Coptic, and others; the Greek and Latin, being the most numerous and powerful, receiving by far the largest shares. Almost all the incidents in the last hours of our Saviour's passion have their scene fixed under this spacious roof. As it was the week of the Latin Easter, young priests of that communion were busily employed in conducting pilgrims over the various sacred spots, and repeating to them the narratives connected with them; while at intervals they chanted Latin hymns. We joined ourselves to one of those companies. Here was the place where Jesus was scourged, and the pillar to which he was bound; in this place he was mocked; here, again, his garments were divided; and this is the prison in which he was kept while the Roman soldiers were making ready the instruments for his crucifixion; and so on with much of the same kind. It seems to have been the aim of the different Churches to pile up wonders within these walls, and to bring them into a most convenient proximity. If you will turn aside for a little into the gorgeous chapel of the Greek Church, they will show you a large round stone which, copying a well-known heathen fiction, they call the "Navel-stone," and insist on your believing that it marks the centre of the world; and they will gravely point you to another place where the skull of Adam was discovered, though they are puzzled when you ask them how it was identified as having belonged to our great progenitor.

After having nearly completed the circuit, we ascended by a considerably long flight of steps to the place which is pointed out as Calvary, where we were shown three holes in a rock, in which, we were told, the three crosses were inserted, with our

Lord's in the middle. We were even pointed to a remarkable rent in a neighbouring rock, which was produced by the earthquake that signalized the awful hour of the crucifixion. Descending from this a distance of apparently about forty yards, we were conducted to the empty sepulchre of Christ. It stands directly beneath the dome of the church, from which the light streams down upon it, and makes it more distinctly luminous than any other object in the sacred edifice. It is a small, oblong, quadrilateral structure, composed of white marble, that has become yellow with the age and incense of so many centuries. Many of the lame and blind, mingling with the pilgrims, were clustering near its entrance when we approached. It consists of an ante-chamber capable of holding six or eight persons, in which the stone is shown on which the angel sat when the disciples came in the early dawn to the empty grave; though a duplicate of this stone, strongly affirmed to be the original one, is exhibited in the Armenian Convent. Beyond this is the actual chamber of the sepulchre itself, declared to be the veritable "place where the Lord lay." Putting our shoes from off our feet, we bent lowly and entered. There was a sarcophagus or stone coffin covered with a simple polished stone, with eight burning lamps of gold or silver—all of them the gift of monarchs or princes—shedding down upon it a tranquil light; and this was said to cover the brief resting-place of that body which "knew no corruption." There was one who had entered before us, kissing the stone with an almost ecstasy of devotion. Even with the doubt present to our mind whether this was the real sepulchre, it was difficult not to be carried away for the moment by sympathy with such earnestness. We felt how easy it was, in certain conditions, to transfer something of that devotion to localities which can only wisely or lawfully be given to Christ himself. We were restored by the remembrance, "He is not here, but is risen as he said." After a hurried glance at the tombs of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea—which are

said to be contained in another part of the edifice—we departed, intending to return again in the evening.

It was the evening of Good Friday, when the various scenes in our Saviour's passion were to be enacted in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. When we arrived, the immense building was crowded; so that it was with some difficulty we found our way to a pillar not far from the supposed Calvary, against which we tried to lean for rest and safety. As we had anticipated, the English Jesuit was there, with the Scottish marquis holding aloft a lighted candle. The first thing that struck us was the marching in, and planting at different places in the crowd, of a number of Turkish soldiers, who had come, as they said with sarcastic contempt, "to keep peace among the Christians." And no doubt they had too much pretext for this, for riots were far from infrequent on such occasions; it had even been no unusual thing for persons to be trampled to death in the crowd. And when the Greek and Latin Easters happened in the same week, the mutual hatred of the two rival communions was certain to vent itself in scenes of blood.

After some delay, the sound of plaintive music was heard in the distance, but gradually approaching nearer. By-and-by, a great procession bearing lights and crucifixes, with a multitude of young choristers robed in scarlet, were seen ascending the steps towards Calvary, one cross of large size carried aloft having a figure upon it representing Christ. The figure was of the colour of flesh, nailed to the cross by the hands and the feet with great nails, with a thorny crown upon its head, and with the appearance of blood trickling down from the temple and the sides. The great cross with this life-like image upon it was fixed in the middle of the rock on Calvary, and there it remained for a time exposed to the gaze of all the spectators. A sermon of an exceedingly dramatic kind was then preached by a priest, at the foot of the cross; after which, two persons approached, representing Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea, who, ascending

a ladder, and having hammers and other instruments handed to them, unfastened the nails, and taking down the body received it into a winding-sheet. Another sermon was then preached in English, by Monsignor Capel, in which Protestant heretics, like ourselves, were informed that we were "the other sheep not of this fold," of which Jesus had spoken on one occasion, and were exhorted to come into the better and safer fold in which the preacher was. Certainly the scenes of irreverent superstition, from the midst of which his appeal was made, were not fitted to make the fold attractive. The body was then covered and borne in procession, and amid the chanting of hymns, to the stone of unction which we have already described, where sweet spices were laid upon it and aromatic incense waved over it; the whole ending in its being carried to the sepulchre, and placed there as if in burial, from which it was to be brought forth again, with every sign of exultation and triumph, on the Easter morning. We confess to our having been greatly shocked and grieved by this performance. The most sacred events were dwarfed by it and degraded. Instead of ensouling those facts, it seemed rather to take the soul out of them. It was an intrusion into an awful presence, in which angels would have veiled their faces with their wings. It did not appear generally to impress the spectators; but how great was the danger that even those who were impressed would mistake the mere temporary excitement of their sensibilities for the working of true religious feeling!

This was the scene at the Latin Easter; but at the Greek Easter, which follows somewhat later, there is not only superstition, but what it is impossible to characterize otherwise than as gross and impious imposture. Even the Roman Catholic Church reprobates and ridicules it, though she can scarcely do this with clean hands while she continues to sanction the annual liquefaction of the blood of St. Januarius at Naples. Then the Greek bishop or patriarch, descending into the Holy Sepulchre,

pretends to receive fire from heaven, such as that which came down at the first Christian Pentecost. At a particular juncture, a sudden noise like the rumbling of distant thunder is heard; instant cries follow, "The fire, the holy fire, has fallen!" and soon after a light is thrust through an opening in the tomb—a supply of the miraculous flame having first been secured for the monks in the Convent of Mar Saba. The numerous pilgrims, frantic with excitement, rush with their candles to the entrance and catch the sacred fire, and soon the whole place is in a blaze of illumination. To gain this one prize, we are assured, to bathe in the Jordan, and to carry away a dress that has been dipped in its waters, which is to be afterwards used as a winding-sheet, has been the object for which multitudes have come from far-distant countries, and travelled with incredible hardships over thousands of miles. The candles are soon extinguished, and carried home to their villages far away, as the most precious trophies. From that time, we are told, they appear on every important occasion in their history. They are lit again, and held over the man's head and over that of his bride, when he is married; they serve as tapers at the baptism of his children; when extinguished, they are hung over the threshold of his door, and serve as a safeguard against all intruders, and goblins, and ghosts. And when eventually he sets forth on his last earthly pilgrimage, and sickness, and pain, and trembling, and sorrow are the sole companions of his dread journey, then the priest will hold up the remains of these relics before his already half-glazed eyes, and they are expected to cheer him through the valley of the shadow of death. The last service they render is, when once more lighted, they are placed at the feet of the dead man, with his rigid form and closed eyes, and here they burn on lower and lower through the long hours of night till they expire.

How strange and saddening it is that that edifice which, beyond all others, claims to enshrine the spots on which occurred

the great events of human redemption, should be the chosen scene in which superstition, imposture, and jugglery play such foul and fantastic tricks as are a scandal to the world! But is there evidence to convince the unprepossessed mind that this church does contain the actual scenes of our Lord's crucifixion and resurrection? We suspect that modern inquiry will prove this old and extensively-credited tradition to have been a mistake and a delusion. When we were in Jerusalem, we were convinced on this matter against our will; the old cherished tradition died very hard within us. Our process of doubting was this. We knew from the Gospel narratives that our Lord was crucified and buried outside the walls of the city. But when we stood on the roof of the Protestant bishop's house, and took in at a glance the whole look of the city, we were astonished to observe how very near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre stood to its centre. It was next to impossible for us to believe that when Jerusalem contained a population perhaps fifty times greater than it now does, its boundaries were narrower; and this in the only direction in which it was possible for the city to have greatly extended—that is, towards the north-west. All topography then is against the supposition that the tomb of Jesus was here. But when we examine the evidence of historical tradition, we find that the links in the chain are weakest where they need to be strongest, and that they dissolve into sand while we handle them. The apostles do not appear to have given any heed to the scenes of those events. Those earnest, suffering men were concerned with the facts, not with the localities. Paul visits Jerusalem once and again, and he does not even once speak either of Calvary or of the empty grave. Then when, at the destruction of Jerusalem, the Christians fled from it to Pella, they did not return for more than sixty years, during which intervening period the whole city had been reduced to ruins. And if it be true, as Jerome says from mere hearsay, that Hadrian, in order to insult the Christians, built

over the place of Christ's sepulchre a temple to the Paphian Venus, how was it that when the Empress Helena came eagerly searching for the sepulchre, she did not find her information in this circumstance, but was obliged to draw it out by torture, in her own imperial way, from a few unhappy Jews who were ready to purchase their liberty and their lives by an easy falsehood, which the credulous old Empress was even more ready to swallow than they were to invent?

Let us notice in connection with these reasonings the fact that those travellers who have done so much to cast doubt upon the genuineness of the traditional scene of the resurrection, are quite as much at variance with each other in their attempts to associate the all-important event with some other spot. Dr. Robinson conjectures that it must have been on the road leading from the Damascus or the Jaffa gate; more recent travellers give their reasons for preferring an open space outside St. Stephen's-gate, which is to this day a place of burial, and looks down towards Gethsemane. Do not all these facts lead to the conclusion that it was the intention of Providence, for the wisest and most beneficent ends, to withhold from us this knowledge? He who "knew what was in man" concealed the place where he had buried Moses, that the Israelites might not be tempted to turn it into a scene of superstition. And on the same principle, it appears to have been ordered that the spots on which the most momentous events in the life of Christ occurred, should be veiled in uncertainty. Great natural objects in Palestine, such as mountains, and rivers, and lakes, and valleys—the knowledge of which helps to confirm our faith, and to illustrate the Scriptures—are capable of being identified; but minute objects which would be almost certain, if known, to be abused to purposes of superstition, are left undiscoverable. We know Mount Olivet, but we cannot tell where are the very spots on the mountain where our Redeemer retired to pray. We can identify Bethany, but not with certainty the green-sward

near to it from which Christ ascended to heaven. We are no more able to declare with confidence where was the tomb of Christ, than where was the grave of Moses. God would cut us off from temptations to superstition. Moreover, he would prevent us from localizing a religion which was designed to be universal,—from attaching that kind and measure of interest to places which can only properly belong to the facts of which those places were the scene, from materializing the spiritual, and from in any degree enchaining, as it were, in a temple made with hands that religion which is destined to turn the whole earth into a temple of God.

How different from all the gaudy tinsel and tawdry finery and unreality of which we had witnessed so much in that house of superstition, was the spectacle which we beheld on a following day, when, wandering a little way outside the walls of the city, we came upon the dwellings of the lepers! It is quite near to Zion-gate, and within an arrow-shot of the traditional tomb of David. There was no terrible reality which we saw in Jerusalem equal to this. The place is separated from all other human habitations, and consists of a rude court or inclosure, containing about twenty miserable huts or kennels. At the sound of our voices and footsteps the lepers came out into the sunlight, clamouring, with most unearthly sounds, for charity. It was a horrid picture that unhappy band, looking as if a triple curse had fallen on them. Death was visibly eating them away. Some were of a liver colour, others white as snow,—all deformed. Handless arms were held out to us; half consumed limbs were obtruded; countenances wofully defaced and eyeless were turned up to us; and cries came out from palateless mouths that were wildly imploring and inhuman. The old law which prohibited the leper from touching or drawing near to a clean person was scrupulously regarded by them, so that, even when they begged, they stretched out to us little iron cups, into which we might drop our alms. There was no possibility of

resisting the appeals of such wretchedness as this. Various reflections occurred to us as we looked on those rotting wrecks of our humanity. We were struck anew with the wisdom of the Levitical law in its provisions for the isolation and treatment of lepers, being evidently adapted to restrict the disease within the narrowest limits. We saw, with deepened impression, with what instructive fitness leprosy has been employed in Scripture as the emblem of sin—hereditary, contagious, ever tending to increase, and incurable except by the power of God. And we bore away from the spectacle a deeper sense of the infinite compassion and divine power of Christ. One look at a leper assures you that no power but God's can cure such ingrained and malignant disease as this. But Jesus did it, not disdaining even to touch with his gentle hand the loathsome sufferer, and sending him away to the temple to give God the praise.

But there was one place in Jerusalem which we had yet to visit, "the most sacred spot in the Mohammedan world next to Mecca, the most beautiful structure for Mohammedan worship next to Cordova"—the Mosque of Omar, known in Moslem speech as the "Dome of the Rock," or the "Noble Sanctuary." We shall not minutely record those accurate measurements of its size which are to be found repeated by so many writers, or attempt to play with the phraseology of architecture. We shall be satisfied if, by a few sentences, we succeed in conveying a clear impression of its position and appearance, though every picture that one sees of Jerusalem makes him more or less familiar with it. On the summit of Mount Moriah, which has been artificially levelled, there spreads the noble inclosure of the Haram, consisting, it is believed, of thirty-five acres more or less. This inclosure is the most beautifully green of any spot in or around Jerusalem. Its beauty is much increased by solitary olives, planes, and cypresses, by graceful fountains, and praying-places exquisitely adorned in the peculiar style of Arabian architecture. Nearly in the centre of this Haram is a raised

MOSQUE OF OMAR.

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platform, to which entrance is found by four richly-ornamented gateways; and on this platform, with a pavement, in some places of marble and in others of white polished limestone-rock, rests this grand cathedral of the Mohammedan faith. In shape, it is an octagon, each side of which measures sixty-seven feet. Its walls, rising in successive storeys to a height of more than a hundred feet, are adorned with variegated marble of elegant and intricate pattern. Above, there rises a beautiful bulbous-shaped dome of blue, surmounted by a glittering crescent. There is a gracefulness of proportion and a light airy elegance about it, to which we saw nothing to compare in all the East. This was our impression even when near it. But our admiration of the whole picture was deepened when we afterwards gazed upon it in an afternoon from the distance of the Mount of Olives. Every sound was hushed, and there it seemed to rest—

> "In undisturbed and lone serenity,
> Finding itself a solemn sanctuary
> In the profound of heaven."

Its beautiful green-sward, dotted and shaded, here and there, with some solitary tree of darker hue, its exquisitely carved marble fountains, its praying-niches and places for reading and meditation, its veiled women in dresses of pure white moving over the scene, and appearing and disappearing like creatures from the spirit-world, its turbaned men bending or laid prostrate in the various acts of Moslem worship, the noble dome of the Mosque rising grandly in the centre of all, and giving back in many-coloured glory the splendours of the western heaven, altogether presented one of the most unique pictures in the world.

We were admitted to its interior, but it was not equal in furniture or in majestic proportions to the Grand Mosque at Cairo, which we had already seen, or to the Church of St. Sophia at Constantinople, which we were yet to see; and it contained nothing of special interest, unless some of our readers should

find an exception in the mark of Mohammed's footsteps, or in the finger-prints of the angel Gabriel!

In the south-west corner of the Haram there is another mosque of much smaller dimensions, El Aksa, which is approached from the Dome of the Rock by a paved footpath passing through an avenue of cypress-trees. Originally a Christian church built in the sixth century by the Emperor Justinian, it passed into the hands of the followers of the false prophet at the period of the Saracen conquest. When the Crusaders conquered and recovered Jerusalem, it again became a Christian church, and, designated by them "the Temple of Solomon," gave its name to those military ecclesiastics, the Knights Templars. It would be more admired were it further distant from the overshadowing Mosque, which keeps it under perpetual eclipse. It is like a violet growing beside a sun-flower.

It was not, however, the Mosque and its attendant beauty which gave to this inclosure in our eyes so profound an interest, and made us wish to linger on it for hours; but the belief, which there seems no good reason to dispute, that it really covers the site of the ancient Jewish Temple, with its appurtenances. The thought of this made us turn our back upon the Mosque, and wander again and again in silence over what had once been holy ground. As we sought shelter in the shadow formed by a venerable cypress-tree, our attention was turned to a mass of unhewn rock of great size rising above the surface, and which had evidently remained through thousands of years, amid all the signs of human art and exquisite ornament everywhere around it, untouched and unchanged. No mallet or chisel had ever fallen upon it. Why was this? There must surely have been some mighty reason for leaving it thus unchanged, when everything else was changed,—remaining to this hour the highest natural point on Mount Moriah. It seemed reasonably probable, as some have suggested, that either on this very spot, or near it, Abraham had reared the altar and

kindled the fire for the sacrifice of Isaac, when his uplifted hand was stayed and arrested by the angel's voice. Nor could it be far from this that Ornan the Jebusite had his threshing-floor, and was engaged in threshing wheat when the plague was desolating Jerusalem. "Then the angel of the Lord came and stood by the threshing-floor, having a drawn sword in his hand, stretched over Jerusalem." From the hill of Zion on the opposite side, over the Tyropæan Valley, David beheld the vision, and prostrating himself with his elders before the Lord, hastened, under the direction of the prophet Gad, to build an altar and to offer sacrifices. "And David bought the threshing-floor for six hundred shekels of gold, offered burnt-offerings and peace-offerings, and called upon the Lord; and the Lord answered him from heaven by fire upon the altar of burnt-offering. And the Lord commanded the angel, and he put up his sword again into the sheath thereof." Around this memorable rock Solomon afterwards erected his Temple; and some have ventured the bold conjecture that on this unhewn mass, so rich in sacred memories even then, he reared the altar of burnt-offering. If there is any truth in these conjectures, then it rises to something more than probability that this very inclosure on which we now stood, was trodden for many a century by the feet of prophets and men of God; and that at length it witnessed many of the miracles and echoed many of the lessons of the great Teacher himself, as he walked upon it followed by groups of wondering listeners, and "spake as never man spake." Few scenes, therefore, in all the world, cluster with so many hallowed associations. We felt that this spot belonged especially, and by a kind of inalienable right, to the Christian Church. And as we turned round and saw the gilded crescent on the top of the Mosque, or looked forth and beheld the crescent-ensign waving from the Turkish citadel, we cried out in spirit, "How long, O Lord, how long!"

As we returned from this great scene, and looked down to

the north of the Temple area, we noticed a deep chasm, which, we were told, marked the ruins of the ancient pool of Bethesda. If it be indeed this, how has its glory departed! Only a few of the porches can now be traced where the sick were laid, and in one of which Christ healed the impotent man who had been afflicted "for thirty and eight years." There are no gurgling waters now, or descending angel to impart to them healing virtue; but nettles, and weeds, and rubbish, cover and pollute the hospital in which God himself was the healer.—The pool of Hezekiah, which we also visited, does credit to this day, after the lapse of more than two thousand years, to the engineering skill and patriotic energy of that pious king whom commentators usually describe as pliant and passive, but who was really one of the most active monarchs that ever sat on the throne of Judah. In its uninjured state, that immense reservoir could have held water for the supply of half Jerusalem. At this hour the principal baths of the city are filled from it.

We have now noticed the chief places that were visited by us within the walls. But there was one place without the walls to which we made frequent visits during our city wanderings, and which exercised over us, during the whole time of our stay in Jerusalem, an irresistible fascination. We refer, of course, to the Garden of Gethsemane. Let us describe our first visit to it. Going out of the city by St. Stephen's-gate, we passed through the midst of a Mohammedan burying-ground, which comes up almost to the gate. It was a Moslem holiday, and multitudes of women and children were sitting at picnics among the tombs; for this people have no sensibility or awe at the neighbourhood of death. They are merry and festive with their dead sleeping a few inches beneath their feet. Not many steps forward brought us to the brow of a precipice; and looking down a few hundred yards, we saw, at the foot of that part of Olivet which comes nearest to Jerusalem, the solemn garden stretched out before us. We had no inclination now to advert

to the fact that the traditional scene of Stephen's martyrdom was almost at our side. Our eye was rivetted on the one spot beneath. Descending by a winding rocky path, we crossed the empty channel of the Kidron by a little bridge; and then, going up a few paces, and knocking at a door in the lofty gray wall by which the garden is surrounded, we were received by one of the monks to whose care the garden is committed. Flowers are assiduously cultivated within the sacred inclosure,—the wild-rose, the passion-flower, with rosemary, wormwood, and other symbolical herbs; but those eight old olive-trees, with their enormous girths and fantastically gnarled branches, were really the only objects that we looked upon. They can be historically certified as twelve hundred years old; and as it is one law in the natural life of the olive that it sprouts again after it has been cut down to the level of the ground, on the supposition that this is the real Gethsemane, there is nothing improbable in the imagination that those patriarchal olives may have grown from the very trees which shaded the place of our Redeemer's ineffable soul-agony and sweat of blood. And is the supposition unlikely? It is surely possible on these matters to doubt too much. The strong acid of modern criticism sometimes tries to consume real gold. The limits of the original garden must have been a good deal more extensive; but many things combine to favour the belief that this inclosed portion of Olivet formed a part of it.

The evangelical narrative distinctly indicates that the place was reached by our Lord and his disciples almost immediately after they had crossed the Kidron; and the chain of clear, unwavering tradition from the days of Eusebius downwards, links us to the same locality. And there are two facts which so exactly fit in to this opinion as not a little to confirm us in the belief that this was indeed the veritable garden of the agony. Does it not seem obvious from the Gospel histories, that on the evening of his mysterious soul-conflict, when "it pleased the

Father to bruise him," our Lord sought for darkness as well as silence? And as it was then full moon, this was the one place over which the neighbouring rocks on the Jerusalem side of the Kidron gorge would cast a long and deep shadow, and aiding that of the olive-trees, would make the awful retirement complete. Then, when Jesus is represented as saying to his disciples at the entrance to the garden, "Arise, let us be going: see, he is at hand that doth betray me," it would appear that his expectant eye must have seen from that point the exit of Judas and his ruffian-band, bearing lanterns and torches, from one of the eastern gates, or their coming round the corner of the wall; and it is remarkable that the same view can be commanded from the midst of those aged olives now. It was natural that with these convictions we should abandon ourselves for a time to the influence of the *religio loci*—the sacred associations of the scene. We kept ourselves carefully aloof from the good-natured monks, with their puerile legends, and sitting down alone, under what seemed the oldest of the olive-trees, took the evangelist Luke for our only guide. We thought of that most memorable and momentous of all nights in the history of human redemption. We thought of the prostrate form of the Son of God, of his "strong crying and tears," of his intense soul-anguish, of his sweat of blood, of that most glorious triumph of resignation to the will of his Father which earth ever witnessed, and of that love to his people, which many waters could not quench or many floods drown. We entered into the spirit of those words of the hymn,—

"Go to dark Gethsemane,
Ye that feel the Tempter's power;
Your Redeemer's conflict see,
Watch with him one bitter hour:
Turn not from his griefs away;
Learn of Jesus Christ to pray."

Many a time afterwards, we came to the brow of the precipice before St. Stephen's-gate, and gazed silently down into the garden. May Gethsemane be green in our memory for ever!

VII.

Round about Jerusalem.

The brook Kidron—Happy scenes when it begins to flow—The four monuments—Their probable age—Teaching custom—Valley of Jehoshaphat—The Jews' burying-ground—Ugly adventure [Mark v. 1–3]—*The fountain of the Virgin—Ascent to the village of Siloam* [1 Kings xi. 7; Luke xiii. 4]—*Bedouin maidens—The domestic hand-mill* [Matt. xxiv. 41]—*The fountain and pool of Siloam* [John vii. 37, 38]—"*The king's gardens*"—*En-rogel* [1 Kings i. 9]—*Valley of Hinnom* [1 Kings xi. 7]—*Probable scene of Judas's suicide* [Acts i. 18, 19]—*Sepulchre of David—Plain of Rephaim—The Lower and Upper Gihon—A ruined aqueduct—Tower of David* [2 Sam. v. 9]—*Modern uses—Lively scenes near the Jaffa-gate—Sepulchres of the kings—The siesta—Prevalent conjecture in Jerusalem about the place of the crucifixion—Recent murder—Road to Anathoth—Traditional grotto of Jeremiah—Subterranean quarries—Probable uses* [1 Kings vi. 7]—*Adventures—Sunset from the Mount of Olives—Gates shut*—"*Bucksheesh.*"

E devote this chapter mainly to objects of Biblical interest that were visited by us immediately outside the walls of Jerusalem, literally "walking about Zion and going round about her;" and this, with the exception of some notices of the explorations of Captain Warren and his intelligent fellow-labourers, shall be our last chapter on the Holy City. We have the more satisfaction in conducting such a circuit, that we come into contact with a greater number of natural objects that can be identified with certainty as having sacred memories hanging around them; and that the structures of man's erection outside the walls have not so generally been destroyed by the plough of human conquest, or rendered difficult to verify by the worse plough of a too remorseless criticism.

There is a bridle-path close to the walls, on which it would

be possible for one on the back of a mule to perform the circuit in a brief space of time; but there would be little benefit from this, beyond a somewhat rough and uncomfortable lesson in riding. If our chief end was to be gained, of shedding light upon the Scriptures and more fully appreciating Scripture allusions by means of objects that lay open to a little research on every side, it was necessary that we should spend a good part of our time in walking in the deep valleys by which three parts of the city are encircled.

We began, accordingly, in the channel of the brook Kidron, and proceeded slowly down the valley of Jehoshaphat. The channel was quite empty, and even covered with grass, so that in many places it was not easy to trace the bed of the torrent; the fact being, that it is dry at this part nine months in the year, but leaping out from its subterranean chambers at a point a little south of Jerusalem, it flows on in a comparatively narrow stream, down past the Convent of Mar Saba to the Dead Sea. There have been persons that have spent the winter and spring in Jerusalem, who have never seen water in this Kidron channel even in the rainy months, and who have therefore raised a doubt whether its course at this part is not uniformly underground. But those seasons are exceptional; and there are other winters and springs in which the torrent courses through the valley with such force and volume as to render even an attempt to cross it dangerous. When the cry is carried through Jerusalem in a morning, "The Kidron flows!" it is heard with universal welcome, for it is a sure sign that the hidden fountains beneath are filled, and that there will be no scarcity of water during all the summer months. The Kidron water is then sold in the city like milk, and thousands come crowding out from its various gates to keep holiday upon its banks. Turbaned men sit under the olive-trees and smoke their long tchibouks or gurgling nerghilès; white-robed women regale themselves with fruits and sweetmeats; children of both sexes

VALLEY OF JEHOSHAPHAT AND BROOK KIDRON.

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gather flowers from the torrent's side, and splash in it merrily with hands and feet at the point where it seems to leap into life; even the Pasha with his suite rides along the margin of the sparkling brook as if to inaugurate its new birth, until the narrowing ground makes progress difficult;—and the genial Miss Bremer, who once witnessed such a joyous spectacle, adds this other touching feature to the picture, that even the poor lepers, catching something of the general joy, come out from their miserable dwellings, and sitting on some far-off eminence, cry aloud for alms, in the hope that the general gratitude and gladness of the people will bring them a larger meed of charity.

We pass a little way down the gorge, and, on the eastern side of the Kidron come upon a cluster of four monuments that at once arrest our attention. These are the reputed tombs of Absalom, of the martyred Zecharias, of the good King Jehoshaphat, and of the apostle James the Just. The most remarkable of these are the two first, each of which is a single block sculptured out of the solid rock, and detached from it; and the monolith of Absalom with its Ionic pilasters, its gracefully ornamented frieze, and its conically-shaped summit expanding at the top into a flower, is an elegant and striking erection. There are strong historical and architectural reasons for calling in question the authenticity of every one of these monuments. The explicit statement of Scripture that the ashes of King Jehoshaphat were laid with honour in the royal sepulchres in the city of David, is dead against the notion that this is his tomb. What probability is there that such an elaborate and unique structure would be permitted to be erected to one like Zecharias, who, though he was a true martyr, at the time of his death had power and popular feeling running against him? And can this valley of the Kidron be the "King's dale" in which Absalom erected his pillar, to perpetuate his name, when he knew that he should have no posterity? At the same

time, the architectural style of these imposing structures carries us some centuries back beyond the Christian era. An archæologist of European reputation, who was of our party in this and many other excursions, after examining the exterior of all these piles, and creeping through an aperture into one of them, where he had to clear his way with a long-pointed stick from centipedes and other horrid reptiles, fixed their date at about 200 years B.C. But even this date makes them very old; and though the occasion of their erection remains unknown, we have entire sympathy with the observation of our shrewd and learned friend, the author of "The Land and the Book," that the simple fact that they must have been standing very much as they now appear when our Lord was on the earth, and that he must often have looked on them and spoken of them, invests them with a special and sacred interest.

As both Jews and Mohammedans firmly believe that this is the actual Absalom's pillar, they are accustomed, whenever they pass it, to cast a stone at it as a testimony against filial disobedience, and to teach their children to do the same; the consequence of which is, that heaps of stones are gathered in a broken place near its summit, and a much greater number which had either rebounded or missed the aperture, are scattered around its base. After all, is it not one principal use of monuments to express and perpetuate public sentiment? We are not ashamed to record that we added our stone to the heap.

Our eye was next attracted to innumerable white slabs that seemed to pave the side of Olivet a good way above and around these monuments; and on passing among them, we found that they marked the ground which, for many a century, had been the principal and favourite burying-place of the Jews. Believing, as every Jew does, that the valley of Jehoshaphat beneath is to be the scene of the resurrection and of the general judgment, and that those who are buried in other places must

somehow pass underground in order to reach this scene of universal gathering, they prefer this as their last resting-place above all others, in order that they may escape the unpleasant ordeal of subterranean travel, and be the first to welcome their heavenly King. It is said that they are obliged to pay a large sum for the privilege of being buried here. We were even assured that interment was not allowed to the poor Jew until after sunset,—

> "By the glimmering moonbeam's dusky light,
> Or the lantern dimly burning."

The greater number of the graves, which are very shallow, are dug perpendicularly in the earth; a good many are hollowed slant-wise out of the rock; but a slab of limestone slightly polished uniformly indicates the simple sleeping-place. We spent some time in wandering among those graves, and deciphering the old Hebrew inscriptions, which generally told little more than the name and age of the deceased. We did not meet with a single Jew in all that wide-stretching cemetery looking over upon the site of the ancient Temple, where the old worship had so long been dead too; and we had learned by this time easily to distinguish the common Jew, not only by his indestructible typical features, but by his usual dress of thick fur cap, and light, loose, flowing robe, and his one cork-screw curl coming down on one side of his face, and deducting somewhat from its look of manliness. But we were awakened from our reverie by another presence. Two or three stones, thrown with much force, alighted unpleasantly near us; and in looking in the direction in which they had come, we saw a man, almost quite naked, and evidently a maniac, skulking angrily away. He had been dwelling in one of the empty rock-tombs, and we had disturbed him in his ghastly cell. It was impossible not to be reminded of the demoniac long ago among the rock-graves of Gadara.

Descending again into the valley and skirting along the base of Mount Moriah, we came in less than a quarter of an hour to

a large pool of water, known in these days as the "Fountain of the Virgin." It is reached by two flights of steps considerably below the ground-level, and is evidently fed, through a subterranean passage, from aqueducts or fountains far back in the Temple-mount; and, like the classic fountain of Vaucluse, it has this peculiarity on which no research or science has yet shed satisfactory light, that it ebbs and flows like a tide, though the periods of its fluctuation are irregular. As it has not been identified with any of the fountains named in Scripture, we only lingered for a few moments on its margin, to see the people filling their quaint pitchers and goat-skin pouches from it, which they were doing in considerable numbers.

But the cluster of houses, somewhat further down, and on the opposite side of the ravine, presented more to interest us. It was the village of Siloam, situated a little way up the steep rocky side of the southern extremity of Olivet, called the "Mount of Offence," because here Solomon, in the latter and inglorious years of his reign, gave way to idolatrous practices, "building a high place for Chemosh, the abomination of Moab, and for Moloch, the abomination of the children of Ammon,"

> "On that opprobrious hill,—
> Audacious neighbourhood."

Once it must have been a place of some importance, a kind of fashionable suburban village; for Pharaoh's daughter and Solomon's queen had a palace here. Even in our Lord's times we conclude that it must have contained large and imposing public buildings; for it was here that that tower of Siloam fell by which eighteen persons perished,—an event which was reported to our Lord as the news of the day, and on which he suspended great religious lessons and moral warnings for all times. But it is now a miserable and confused collection of huts, inhabited by half-savage Bedouins, who live for the most part on plunder, and help to make all the neighbourhood around Jerusalem unsafe.

We clambered up to it with some difficulty; and with more difficulty we picked our way in the midst of noisome heaps and of ugly mongrel dogs which resented our intrusion. The weather had become hot, and many of the villagers had already migrated, according to their custom, to the empty cave-sepulchres in the neighbourhood, which were to be their summer residence. But it was not yet a deserted village. Listening, we heard a sound from one of the houses, which we guessed to be that of a hand-mill on which corn was being ground for the afternoon's meal. We entered, after having used the ceremony of knocking more than once, and found a young woman seated on the earthen floor, and busily at work with her mill. She showed no sign of alarm at the rather sudden apparition; but interpreting our wishes, took off the upper circular stone, showed us the iron pivot in the lower stone on which it revolved, and also the hollow slant by which the meal escaped after it was ground. As we were examining it, and remarking to our friends on its close resemblance to the Highland querns preserved in some of our antiquarian museums at home, a second girl entered, and sitting down on the opposite side, and laying hold of the well-worn handle, the little mill went round more rapidly and merrily than ever. We were struck with the attention to ornament which these young Bedouin women showed in their very humble spheres. Their arms were tattooed in various places, their nails were dyed red, and each bore upon her wrist what seemed a thin bracelet of silver, evidently old and worn, the cherished heirloom of many a Bedouin generation. But what struck us most of all was the fact that this grinding at the mill was still the work of females, as in the times of Christ; and that on the slopes of that same mountain on which this village nestled, probably not half a mile distant, He had spoken those prophetic words, when seeking to give his disciples a vivid impression of the suddenness of the destruction that was to break upon Jerusalem when

her hour had come, "Two women shall be grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left."

This was the village of Siloam, but where were the fountain and the pool called by the same name? There, further down in the valley, at the base of Ophel and at the mouth of the Tyropœan, where it begins to divide between Mounts Zion and Moriah. Let us pilot our way down to them along that slanting path. The fountain comes flowing softly and silently out from beneath a rock that rises precipitously fifty feet above your head,—its waters clear as crystal, and deliciously cool. Josephus enables us to assure ourselves that it is the actual streamlet of which Isaiah speaks, as "the waters of Shiloah that go softly;" and coming forth as it appears to do from beneath the rocky mountain on which the Jewish Temple stood, our great Milton is not less graphically accurate when he sings of it as

> "Siloah's brook that flowed
> Fast by the oracle of God."

Indeed, we might claim for Milton what the Dean of Westminster has with just admiration claimed for Keble, the wonderful power of accurately representing, even in the minuter lines of form and more delicate colours, the image of scenes on which their bodily eyes had never looked. It would be possible to produce lines and epithets as felicitous in this respect from the "Paradise Regained" as from the "Christian Year."

It had long been understood that a zigzag tunnel connected the waters that supplied this Siloam stream with the "Fountain of the Virgin," and one fruit of Captain Warren's explorations has been to place this beyond all doubt. This then is the actual fountain of which the beautiful tradition has been handed down from earliest Christian times, that during the seven days of the "Feast of Tabernacles," a procession of priests coming out from Jerusalem every morning with a golden pitcher, and filling it with water from this living rill, carried it

amid the music of trumpets and cymbals, of psalteries and harps, and poured it upon the sacrifice in the Temple. Advancing a few paces inwards, we come to a pool in which the waters are gathered before emerging from the rock into the sunlight, and to which the blind man spoken of in John's Gospel was commanded by Jesus, after he had anointed his eyes with the clay, to "go and wash, that he might receive his sight." We can imagine him led down that flight of rocky steps by the hand of some little boy; but he would need no hand to guide him as he went back again to the city with restored vision and adoring gratitude.

When the stream had flowed some yards out from the rock, we saw numbers of women from the neighbouring Siloam washing clothes in the pure rocky channel. Thence it flowed to a singularly fertile spot called "the King's Gardens," where, divided into a thousand irrigating rills, it gave life and vigour to numerous fruit-trees, vegetables, and flowers, rendering this the most productive spot in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. Were these gardens in any way connected, in the palmy days of Jewish history, with the palace of Solomon's queen in that Siloam near at hand? Is it even extravagant to conjecture that in their graceful beauty, when art put forth all its strength and skill to help nature, these gardens, in their inclosed retirement and exuberant Eastern abundance, may have supplied to the royal poet some of the gorgeous imagery in the Song of Songs?

We now approach the point at which the valley of Hinnom, which forms the southern boundary of Jerusalem, intersects the valley of Jehoshaphat; and not far from this point, we turn aside to another fountain of extraordinary depth, the "En-rogel" of Old Testament history, or Well of Joab. There seems no good reason to doubt that it marks the scene where Adonijah was ripening his conspiracy and holding high festival with Joab and the other leaders of his rebel faction, when they were

startled by the loud shout of the loyal multitude in the neighbouring city, easily heard at this distance, which followed the proclamation of Solomon as king, and in a moment turned their ambitious hopes to terror and despair.

It is remarkable to what an extent this valley of Hinnom which we are now ascending, is associated with some of the darkest and most revolting passages in the history of the Jews. In some part of it, under the idolatrous kings of Judah, the foul and cruel worship of Moloch was maintained, in which infants were placed in the red-hot arms of the idol, and the shrieks of the little victims were drowned by the beating of drums and cymbals, and by the shouts of maddened worshippers. And certainly there were portions of the valley which appeared, as we stood and looked on them, to have been scenically adapted for such infernal orgies, just as a painter of our own times would choose some wild moor for the scene of a murder or a witches' dance. Gloomy recesses, into which the sunlight never penetrated, with blackened cliffs, and beetling crags which seemed to bear on them the curse of an everlasting barrenness. We recollect that one traveller, wandering alone in this part of Hinnom, was so depressed by the mere scenic influence of the spot, that he was glad to escape from it back to the city, and to listen again to the sound of human voices. How fitting it was that, in the better times of Jewish history, this accursed spot, bearing upon it the deepest stains of human wickedness, was chosen as the place into which all the offal and abominations of Jerusalem were cast, to be consumed by ever-gnawing worms, or destroyed by fires that were kept smoking and burning day and night. And can we wonder that it came to be spoken of by the old prophets, and by our Lord himself, as the very type and shadow of the place of torment, "where their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched!"

"Tophet thence
And black Gehenna called, the type of hell."

We still pass on through a kind of chamber of horrors, or valley of the shadow of death. For on our left there rises an eminence marked along its sides by yawning cavities, which were once elaborately formed tombs, but which now only afford an occasional shelter for shepherds with their little flocks, when they would escape the storm, or shelter themselves from the glare and fire of the noon-day sun. It is named the "Hill of Evil Counsel," from the tradition that the house of Caiaphas the high priest stood on it, and that it was the place where the priests and rulers conspired to destroy Jesus, and where Judas entered with them into his guilty pact of blood. Some scraggy olives overhang a precipitous part of this hill, and one of them is pointed out as the actual tree from which the traitor hanged himself. This is a good deal too circumstantial. But supposing this part of Hinnom to have been the scene of the suicide, it fits in exactly to the narrative in the Acts. There are places with overhanging trees of various kinds, at which the rugged rock rises sheer up to forty or fifty feet; and supposing an individual to be suspended by the neck from a branch of one of those trees, there is nothing improbable in the branch breaking, in his falling body being torn by some jagged projecting stone as he descended, and in his being dashed to pieces by the hard rock at the bottom. The potter's field, which was purchased with the thirty pieces of silver, is shown on the same eminence. We found its soil to be clayey as we walked over it; and if you ask any potter in Jerusalem where he finds his material, it is ten to one that he will direct you to this very Aceldama.

We were now under strong temptation to diverge from the lower line of the valley, and, ascending Mount Zion on our right, to visit a little mosque near the highest point of the mountain outside the city walls, which is said, with the cluster of buildings around it, to cover the sepulchre of David and his most illustrious successors on the throne of Judah. But we had looked on it once already; and we found it so guarded by

Mohammedan jealousy, that we seemed almost grudged a look. We should have run the hazard of being torn to pieces, had we attempted an entrance. When will our brave explorers find access to those royal graves? Probably not until the Crescent ensign has been taken down from yon neighbouring citadel for ever.

We continued our course in the bottom of the valley, which now expanding into fertile fields and little knots of trees, began to verify Milton's words, which up to this point had sounded strangely inapplicable: "the pleasant vale of Hinnom." We could see on our left the verdant plain of Rephaim, the scene and prize of many an ancient conflict; while on our right Zion, bearing on its sides little strips of brairded corn, towered aloft as the natural acropolis of the sacred city. We came upon the ruins of the Lower Gihon, formerly an immense reservoir or artificial lake for supplying Jerusalem with water, but whose bottom was now grown all over with grass, on which donkeys and mules were quietly feeding. The Upper Gihon is of larger proportions, and a good deal further from the city; but it has not been rendered quite useless even by the neglect of thousands of years; for it contained several feet of water; and some were bathing in it, and others leading down animals to drink. Soon after, we crossed the road leading from the Jaffa-gate to Bethlehem, and passed some straggling pillars of that princely aqueduct by which water had been conducted, in the days of the Kings, from Solomon's pools beyond Bethlehem to Jerusalem; and after a few minutes more of hard and weary climbing, we were standing and looking in at the Jaffa-gate.

Look at that black old weather-beaten tower on your right hand, very near its entrance. It is one of the most interesting objects in all Jerusalem. The houses around, and even the old walls of the city on which its shadow falls, appear quite modern beside it. We believe it to be the tower Hippicus of Herod; in which case it is one of the four structures which

Titus caused to be left untouched when he reduced every part of Jerusalem to ruins, in order to give those who might visit what was once Jerusalem, some notion of the strength of the city which he had taken and destroyed. But then Herod did not raise this tower from its foundations, but upon a portion of the old tower of David—the strong fortress with which the valiant king guarded and strengthened himself when, with the help of Joab, he had at length wrested this part of Mount Zion from the Jebusites, and made it the impregnable stronghold of his capital. The lower portion of the structure is evidently much older than the rest; it belongs to another style of masonry, and is probably the oldest structure in Jerusalem—older even than the foundations of the Temple. It carries our thoughts away back almost to the beginnings of the Hebrew monarchy. David's mighty men have leaned upon those stones, and gone their sentinel rounds about them. From the massive summits of that tower, when it stood in its entireness and strength, Hezekiah's chiefs have watched the movements of Sennacherib's splendid hosts. The shadow of Jesus of Nazareth has often fallen on it, as he passed by.

Even to this day, this old tower of David is not without its uses. Cannons are fired from it at the first glimpse of every new moon, and also at sunset during the Mohammedan fast of Ramazan, to let the faithful know that they have now permission to break their long day's fast, and to recover their good temper, with which, it is said, hunger makes sad havoc.

But we must keep outside the gate, which is the busiest of all the entrances to Jerusalem. Looking out upon the rising ground which stretches away to the north of it, we behold a lively picture. That is the favourite pleasure-ground of the people—the public park and promenade of Jerusalem; for even this melancholy city does not all sit in sackcloth. Children and youths are riding on swings stretched from tree to tree. At different spots on the green grass are groups of Mos-

lem women, white draperied, and somewhat transparently veiled, who have come out to sun themselves in the bright April afternoon, and beneath that intensely blue canopy of sky. They are surrounded by children, and served by dark-visaged female slaves. A little lamb, which has evidently been domesticated, forms part of almost every group, and is a great favourite with the children, exceeding even them in its merry gambols. They have brought basket-loads of provisions, and confections in abundance; and overtopping all are those big golden oranges from the gardens of Joppa, carrying a little well of nectar in each of them.

There is no deep valley now until we reach the Damascus-gate; and as we move onward, there are many tokens, in ruined cisterns and the foundations of old houses, that, in the days of Jerusalem's prosperity, the city must have extended in this direction a long way beyond the existing walls. We are aware that some interesting remains, called "the Sepulchres of the Kings," are about a mile to the northward. We have heard of the exquisite friezes that adorn their entrance, with the beautifully carved flowers and grapes, and other devices; and we would willingly go, and "with torch in hand" explore those royal receptacles of the dead. But we are thoroughly fatigued; and as we wish to accomplish our circuit of Jerusalem to-day, we must meanwhile go and invite rest. Besides, we know that these are not the sepulchres of the kings of Bible story. And here is the Damascus-gate, where you cross the northern road to Sychar and the far-distant Damascus. We enter, and pass through the bazaar of the Mohammedan quarter, with its little heaps of tobacco, and coffee, and dried fruits; and in a few minutes are asleep in our quiet, scrupulously clean, earthen-floored chamber.

Within an hour and a half we were again on our feet; for there was one part of the circuit of the wall—that extending from St. Stephen's to the Damascus-gate—which we had yet to

accomplish, and this must be done before sunset. Passing out by the former gate, we now turned our face eastward up the Kidron, or Jehoshaphat valley, keeping generally in the bridle-path near the wall. There is here a rather extensive and level space of ground between the wall and the Kidron gorge; and we found some of the missionaries and savans who had been longest resident in Jerusalem, fixing upon this as the real Golgotha, where the Lord of Glory was crucified. Supposing the wall to have been carried in the same course in our Lord's times as it is now, the conjecture appears far from unlikely. There was room enough not only for the three crosses, but for the crowding multitude, and for all the horrid agencies and accompaniments of crucifixion; and the priests could, in this case, have come out from the neighbouring temple and feasted their malice on the dying agonies, until the supernatural darkness drew its awful curtain over the scene. In this case, also, that Olivet across the narrow gorge would echo back the great Sufferer's dying shout of victory, "It is finished! It is finished!"

We understood that the principal object of interest in this section of the city wall was the remarkably extensive quarry to which there was access from some part of it; and as the entrance was known by us to be narrow, and we had neither guide nor guide-book to help us in the search, we had no little difficulty in discovering it. We recollect that at one point in our progress, on putting aside some rank grass, we came upon an apparent opening in the wall on a level with the ground, which we at once conjectured must be the entrance. What was our horror to find, instead, the dead body of a man who had evidently been murdered not long before,—the murderer not having had time to bury his victim, adopting, in his haste or fear, this readiest method of concealment! Was this some poor benighted traveller, whose steps the stealthy Bedouin had tracked almost to the very gates, and then rifled and slain him? In our own country, our immediate course would have been to

inform the public authorities; and it was with some reluctance that we did violence to our English instincts, and resolved to do nothing. We should certainly have failed, had we interfered, to arouse the Turkish authorities to energetic inquiry; or if we had succeeded in stimulating some spasmodic action about a matter so common, we and our friends would have been complicated with the tragedy. It was easier to determine thus, than to rid our imaginations afterwards of the stiff and blood-stained picture.

Moving on again, and looking far down into the valley with its dark olive-gardens, we could distinctly trace a pathway through them, which we knew to mark the road to "poor Anathoth," the birth-place of Jeremiah the prophet. And as we began to turn round gradually towards the north, there was pointed out to us on the other side the traditional grotto or cave where that tenderest of the prophets, "whose eyes were as a fountain of tears," is said to have penned his Lamentations.

But where, we had begun impatiently to ask, was the opening into those underground quarries, which were affirmed by those who had in some degree explored them, to undermine nearly the whole of Jerusalem? Behind an enormous heap of rubbish, almost within sight of the Damascus-gate, we at last alight on the true entrance; and, backing in on all fours and with some difficulty, we drop down some two or three feet on an equally vast hill of débris within. We have brought some lucifer-matches with us; and having lighted our candles, and affixed the end of a line of cord to a stone near the entrance, we gradually unwind it as we proceed inward—for we may chance to lose our reckonings in the windings of the labyrinth, and a hold of this will help us to find our way out. And now, when we have got down to the level, what a spectacle opens up before us as our eyes become accustomed to the dim light! A subterranean quarry stretches away interminably before us—many have said even to

the distance of the Temple area—while unexplored labyrinths spread into the unbroken darkness on either side. At somewhat irregular distances, rough massive pillars have been left standing to support the natural roof, which rises between thirty and forty feet above our heads—such as may be seen in our salt or coal mines at home; and between these the number of stones which have been excavated, if heaped together, would be sufficient to build a second metropolis. It is curious to notice how, in some instances, immense blocks have been partly separated from the rock, and even shaped, but the process never completed. There is evidence on every side that the mason had been here with his hewing instruments and polishing tools, as well as the quarryman, and that in countless instances the stones must have been carried forth all fashioned and prepared for their appointed place in the building. Minute chips, that would be sufficient to load ten thousand waggons, lie in heaps on every side, such as we are familiar with in the masons'-sheds at home. Surely there is no improbability in the conjecture that this was one of the principal quarries that supplied the material for Solomon's Temple; and that in those numerous recesses, lighted by openings from above, those stones were polished and prepared by cunning hands, which were afterwards to be silently laid in their predestined place in the sacred house, where

> "No hammers fell, no ponderous axes rung;
> Like some tall palm the mystic fabric sprung."

"For the house when it was in building was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither; so that there was neither hammer nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house when it was in building." Let us welcome the analogy which the fact suggests in reference to the temple of the heavenly Church. Its living stones must all be polished and beautified, on the earth beneath, by the grace of the Divine Spirit and the discipline of Providence, ere the good angels bear

them up, and they are laid by the hands of the great Builder in their own chosen place in that house in which every stone is a redeemed soul.

There are hints in Josephus which favour the suggestion that this subterranean desert served another use in the later times of Jewish history, and became the last desperate place of refuge for thousands of Jews during the closing days of the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. Could those stones speak out of the rock, what tales could they tell of gnawing hunger, of abject terror, of wild hope, of impotent revenge! Not so terrible its sights, however, as those which were witnessed in that Hinnom valley on the other side of the city through which we had wandered in the morning, which was so filled with heaps and hillocks of the dead as to make even the Roman leader when he saw them alternately shudder and weep.

Looking around us, we could see immense masses of rock that had fallen long ago from the roof; and even at times, in the death-like silence of the place, we could hear the fall of smaller fragments. This exploration, we saw, was not without danger. It was not long, therefore, ere, following the guidance of our cord, we saw a little pencil ray of light which told us where the entrance was; and it was some relief to find ourselves again under the safer roof of the bright sky.

We suppose it must have been in part the contrast of this darkness that made us wish to finish our day by retracing our steps along this portion of our walk, and going up to watch the sunset from a point on the Mount of Olives. We yielded to the impulse; though we needed all our speed to be in time to look on the descending luminary. But it was indeed a glorious vision, in which the clear atmosphere helped to produce novel effects and to paint objects with hues of exquisite beauty. With what distinctness the parting luminary brought into view distant villages—the white tomb of some old prophet—gray rocks protruding here and there from the green surface—and

even the graceful outline of some solitary tree! What a glory fell upon those mountains of Judah, and on many a summit sacred in Scripture story, the effect ever changing as the great orb dipped nearer and nearer to the Mediterranean! There was another Sun whose setting was once seen from this Olivet, but who rose on the third day never to set again.

But we had been forgetting in our enthusiasm that the gates of the city were closed at sunset; and a night outside the walls was likely to have much more of adventure in it than comfort. We hastened back; a learned friend, however, assuring us that sunset did not begin at the literal disappearance of the sun, but only when three stars were visible in the sky. But our matter-of-fact Turkish guards had evidently no appreciation of this beautiful tradition. When we came up to St. Stephen's-gate, it was shut. What were we to do? We could have endured hunger for a night, but not the cold, which at this season of the year often sinks before midnight many degrees below the freezing-point; and if a few prowling Bedouins found us unarmed, we were certain, at the least, to be robbed and stripped. We called aloud with all our voices, but there was no response from within; though we never doubted that all the while the guards were standing inside that rugged, old wooden gate, enjoying our plight. At length the talismanic word "bucksheesh" gave them back their powers of hearing and speech, and they indicated their willingness to come to terms. Our patience was sorely tried in reducing their demands to a reasonable number of piastres. We began to fear that they would only allow one of us to enter at a time, and that they would demand for each what they had engaged to accept for us all. We therefore held firmly by each other, and, when the gate was opened, pushed in with such a sudden force that the rascals, who had intended the very trick we feared, gave way. We threw down the stipulated piastres, which shone more brightly in the eyes of those most unsentimental Turks than all the sunsets in the world.

VIII.

The Explorations.

Captain Warren—Sergeant Birtles—Previous researches of Captain Wilson—Summary of results—What kind of explorers needed—Difficulties—Accumulated rubbish—Ignorance and bigotry—Amusing instances—Evasions—Experience of explorers on landing at Jaffa—Gunpowder vegetating—The donkey-stable—Irritating restrictions—Vexatious lawsuits—Qualities of native workmen—Descent into the shafts—Tunnels—Dangers—Perilous adventures—Accidents—Results—Interesting articles discovered—Places verified—Water-supply of Old Jerusalem—Solomon and Hezekiah—The Tyropœan Valley—Wilson and Robinson's arches—Questions waiting to be answered—Red-paint characters—Their significance—The Moabite stone—Its age and value [2 Kings iii.]—*Future discovery.*

DURING the portion of March 1869 that we spent in Jerusalem, we had repeated interviews with Captain Warren, were kindly permitted by him to descend several of his shafts and to explore his tunnels, had the design and character of his explorations explained to us, and were enabled, in some degree, to appreciate the formidable difficulties with which he had to contend in endeavouring to promote archæological discovery and to settle some of the most important questions connected with the topography of ancient Jerusalem. In meeting in the streets of the city his shrewd and faithful assistant Sergeant Birtles, followed by a staff of stalwart and intelligent engineers with their unmistakable British look about them, it was difficult to repress a wish to go up and shake hands with them, as if they had been old acquaintances. Indeed, from the first there had been a kindly nod of recognition exchanged between us, before we had gone through the formality of being introduced to them by their chief; while the

sight of one of their shafts, with windlass at the top and a few curiously-disposed Arabs loitering near, made you feel many hundred miles nearer home; and, like one approaching a gold-mine, we could not come within a moderate distance of it without a strong impulse to rush forward and learn whether there had been any new discovery.

We shall not pretend to describe the processes of exploration; for even did we possess engineering skill and a knowledge of technical language sufficient for the purpose, we are convinced that, without a very liberal use of diagrams and photographs, it is impossible by mere description to convey anything beyond the most vague conception of such matters to a general reader. Our purpose will be gained if we succeed in giving a correct impression of the importance of the work, and of the nature of the obstructions so discouraging and irritating to the workers and yet so bravely and patiently met by them, with a summary estimate of the results.

Captain Wilson and his associates had already made valuable contributions to the geographical and antiquarian knowledge of Palestine, before Captain Warren entered on the inviting field. Not to enumerate many minor services, he had, at least to the satisfaction of the greater number of inquirers, identified the site of Capernaum, detected the ruins of Chorazin, and helped to place among the most certain of modern discoveries, on the eastern shore of the Galilean lake, the scene of the destruction of the possessed swine when they ran down a steep place and were drowned in the sea. He had greatly increased our knowledge of the structure of the ancient synagogue, correcting the common popular notions on this subject; and had brought to light some of the most beautiful sculptures on those ecclesiastical buildings, which appear to have been, in many cases, not simply ornamental, but suggestive and emblematic. He had surveyed the district of which the Lake of Galilee was the centre, as well as the important region around Sychar, with its

twin-mountains of Ebal and Gerizim. And he had crowned all his other solid services to science and Biblical study by preparing the material for a complete Ordnance Map of Jerusalem —by numerous well-directed excavations in the sacred city, in which he had guided the course and lightened the work of future labourers—and especially by discovering the spring of the arch which now fitly bears his name, opposite to that which had previously been discovered by Robinson on the Moriah side of the Tyropœan Valley, thus completing the evidence that an ancient bridge had once spanned this ravine and connected the lower with the upper city.

Important results like these, along with other causes, awakened the expectation of other and equally valuable results from further explorations of the same kind in this unexhausted field, conducted by qualified scientific and learned men who should be stationed for a series of years in the country, should be amply supplied with all the apparatus and tools adequate for their work, and have under them a competent number of labourers. It was all very well, in its own place, that persons like ourselves who were out on a short furlough, should skim the surface of the land like summer swallows, and perhaps be able to record some custom among the people, or to observe some feature in the scenery that would shed new or increased light on a sentence in the Word of God. But what was needed was thorough and prolonged investigation that should patiently dig among ruins, decipher inscriptions, discover the localities of lost towns and villages, and, in short, at length supply us with the means of knowing the topography of Palestine as well as we know that of England. We wanted men who should go out with carefully-prepared questions and unsolved problems from England, determined to have the answer or the solution ere they returned,—men who should do for Jerusalem what Layard had done for Nineveh and Rawlinson for Babylon, and what Signor Castellani, by diverting the current of the Tiber, is now

proposing to do for Rome. This led to the formation, in London, in June 1865, of the Palestine Exploration Fund. The programme of this society was admirably comprehensive, embracing, in addition to the objects at which we have hinted, the formation of an Ordnance Map of the Holy Land and of the Sinaitic Peninsula, similar to that which Captain Wilson had already prepared of Jerusalem. But as all these objects could not be accomplished or even attempted at once, it was determined to commence operations in Jerusalem, the natural centre of greatest interest, and where the most important problems had to be solved. In pursuit of this great and sacred enterprise, Captain Warren was sent out, and in February 1867 he appeared in Jerusalem with his mining tools, his scientific instruments, and a picked band of trained assistants.

This accomplished officer found himself at once met by difficulties of various kinds, that severely tested even his sanguine temper and fertility of resource. The experience of Captain Wilson and others had already in part apprized him that the ancient Jerusalem of which he was in search,—the Jerusalem in which our Lord and his contemporaries had walked,—was fifty feet down below the surface of the modern city, and that, in some places, it lay buried more than a hundred feet beneath. There were those who wondered when they read in the newspapers, not long since, that the remains of the old Roman London had been discovered, in tesselated pavement and other signs, fifteen feet beneath the London of our own day, in Bishopgate Street. But the débris that conceals the old Jerusalem, if carried away and massed together, would form a large mountain of itself. And no wonder; for Jerusalem has on three occasions undergone general destruction; and in addition to this, it has been subjected to seventeen sieges, in which its largest and most prominent buildings were certain to suffer most. On these occasions, the people never thought of clearing away the bruised and broken material

and obtaining a deep and solid base for a new erection. The new houses rose upon the ruins of the old. We have a remarkable instance of the effect of this in the Tyropœan Valley, which was once a deep ravine separating Mount Moriah from Mount Zion, but which has been so filled up by the ruins of centuries tumbling into it, that its outline is now scarcely traceable. Then the ruins themselves do not cohere. A few feet below the surface, the débris is almost fluid, and when once set in motion runs like water, and large stones and broken columns intermingled with it are certain then to move also, and to dash with terrific force against the first solid object they touch. It is easy to see how difficult it must have been to sink deep shafts through such loose and treacherous material, and how lateral tunnelling through such rubbish must sometimes have almost appeared like courting destruction.

There was another frequent and vexatious obstruction in the bigotry and ignorance of the people, and even of the public authorities. The bigotry is no doubt declining; for had the same attempt been made even ten years earlier, the opposition would have been much more formidable and dangerous. Within a period of less than twenty years, the state of feeling among the Moslem population presented an unpleasantly practical illustration of the late Isaac Taylor's definition of fanaticism as "enthusiasm inflamed by hatred." It had been observed that, at a particular period in the day, the shadow of the great Mosque of Omar fell upon a certain Christian burying-ground. Even the honour and blessing conveyed by so sacred a shadow was grudged. The public authorities at Jerusalem were strongly urged to have the Christian cemetery removed to some more distant place, and it required all the combined influence of the European consulates to prevent a scandalous order to this effect from being issued.

Later than this, when a firman was sent forth giving permission to persons who were not Mohammedans to visit the

interior of the mosques, it was no uncommon saying among the more intolerant Turks, that while the Sultan might have power to let a Frank enter their mosques, he had no power to let him out again; and there was an evident intention, in the first instance, that the knives of wild dervishes and fanatical dependents on the mosques, should make amends in their own fashion for relaxed severity of restriction or exclusion.

These things are past now; but the prejudice and ignorance in which they originated are very far from having become extinct or inoperative. The exploring party had scarcely landed at Jaffa when they were met by the obstacle which was to annoy them in so many forms afterwards. Their innocent theodolites and sextants were pronounced by the custom-house officers to be warlike stores, and they only escaped seizure on the vice-consul's undertaking to vouch for them that they were of a peaceful nature, and not liable to go off! Indeed, the ignorance of the people in some instances almost exceeded belief. On one occasion, when Captain Warren was engaged in a most interesting exploration connected with Robinson's Arch, he found it necessary to use gunpowder for blasting some of the stones which were too large and hard for the hammer. Immediately the strange rumour was spread among the Moslems that these foreigners were about to deposit little lumps of gunpowder all round the walls of the Noble Sanctuary; that these would grow and grow until they became barrels, and that then, in about twenty years, when the powder crop was ripe, they would come back with some machine and blow the whole place up! Reports of this kind, fostering vague suspicions and fears, produced much anxiety and trouble, though the ignorance sometimes showed itself in an irresistibly ludicrous form. One day when a company of picked men were busily at work in their excavations, they struck in unexpectedly on a donkey-stable in which the owner happened to be present. The poor donkey-man, startled at the apparition of so many begrimed

faces that had suddenly come upon him as if they had sprung out of the earth, fled in precipitation, declaring that he was pursued by Gins or evil spirits!

We can imagine, however, that obstructions of this nature were not so discouraging to our indefatigable explorers, as were the exceptions and conditions which accompanied and clogged the Sultan's permission to excavate. It is plain that the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the Haram Sanctuary were the places around which the questions of greatest interest gathered, and that these questions were almost certain to find a satisfactory solution, were the excavations allowed to be conducted within and beneath those two sacred structures. But they were sternly prohibited from opening their shafts within a certain distance of either of them. This was equivalent to shutting them out entirely from explorations in connection with the former building, which was, in fact, so encircled by convents that it could not even be approached; and the Haram, as belonging to the Moslem, was guarded with a yet intenser jealousy. The only way in which explorations connected with this second grand centre of interest could be made at all, was to sink shafts as near as possible to the prohibited distance, and then to approach the Haram walls by tunnelling underneath.

Even in the case of private properties, the difficulties were often great. Though ignorant as the beasts that perish about all matters of science, householders, when asked to sell their houses for purposes of excavation, were shrewd enough to drive home their advantage and demand an exorbitant price; and some of them, when asked to yield up portions of their gardens, did their utmost to get out of the concession a snug annuity. When we were in Jerusalem, Captain Warren complained to us of a kindred form of annoyance, which appeared for the time to overtop all the others. His researches awakened the selfishly litigious spirit. If some rickety house tumbled down within fifty yards of the mouth of one of his pits, his excavations got

the blame of it, and he was summoned before one of the corrupt native "cadis" and sued for damages that were stated, of course, at a most extravagant figure. In some cases the demand was resisted; in others it was found to be an economy both of time and money to consent to a compromise. But the very likelihood of such fabricated lawsuits arising from every fresh opening of the ground, was disturbing in the extreme. Still, these admirable men took to their work with a will. They knew that the eyes of men of science and religion were fixed on them from every part of the world, that there were rich mines of discovery hidden somewhere within the range of their explorations, and that to help in settling the long perplexed questions of sacred research, and in shedding new light on the inspired records, was something indeed worth living for.

In one quarter in which Captain Warren had probably anticipated some difficulty, he soon found substantial aid, and incidentally wrought out a conclusion which may be of use when applied in other directions. He was obliged to depend for the less skilled forms of labour upon native workmen. And he did not find the Arab to be the intractable creature that he has so often been described to be. At first, indeed, he was inclined to take his work by fits and starts, and the intervals of resting were apt to be much longer than those of working. When any work required plan or thought, he could not be trusted alone. The muscles necessary for the clever handling even of the common wheel-barrow seemed never to have been developed in him; and when he shivered with cold in winter, he could never be made to see that hard working was one of the surest and safest ways to bring heat. But when he found himself paid at the end of the week, not according to the time spent, but to the work done, he saw the equity of the arrangement, and became gradually educated into a fair measure of steadiness in toil. For, while the Arab is slow to believe in goodness, he has a quick appreciation of justice, and a respect for calm power.

Wishing to have some notion of the manner of the excavations, we obtained leave from Captain Warren to descend two of his shafts. It was one of our most memorable adventures in Jerusalem; and as we were utterly new at such work, we suspect we must have looked amusingly awkward and cautious to those who were looking down upon us from the pit-mouth. Taking a lighted candle in one hand, we descended by a rope-ladder, which was fixed to an iron rod driven deep into the ground at the entrance of the shaft. The sides of the shaft were boarded by planks of wood that had been brought from England—for Palestine could not even supply this material sufficiently and in a prepared form; and it rots so quickly, that, in a few months, it needs to have its place supplied by new boarding. When we were about half-way down, we were surprised to find that the earth had bulged out in one place, and that the boarding had cracked and was protruding. It was no easy matter to get past this on the dangling rope-ladder, and any loss of self-possession would have been destruction. But we managed at length to wriggle past, and the remaining part of our descent was easy. We were received by one of Captain Warren's men at the bottom; and passing along a tunnel of some length, in which the earth was very moist and on which drops were constantly falling from the uneven roof, we descended a second shaft to about eighty feet beneath the surface of the ground. There was a tunnel leading from this bottom, and we could hear at no great distance the dripping of water. We were told that one of the tanks or aqueducts of Old Jerusalem had been discovered in that direction, and throwing a stone, we heard its sullen plunge into the depths.

We had obtained but a glimpse, however, of the dangers which those bold explorers were called every day to face. Showers of stones and streams of loose and treacherous shingle were common occurrences. In some places the earth was so poisoned by sewage, that the hands of the workmen broke out

into festering sores; in other places the air was found to be so impure, that the candles refused to burn. On some occasions, when descending into unexplored vaults, the rope-ladder proved much too short, and they had no choice but, holding by stones on the sides of the cavern, to climb down over-hands as they best could, sometimes to the distance of twelve feet. At other times, unable to keep their footing on the slippery soil, they were plunged overhead into an unwelcome bath, unsavoury as well as cold. In another instance, the water from a periodic spring so increased upon them, that they were obliged to flee before it; and when it swelled up to Captain Warren's neck, he could only preserve the candle from extinction by carrying it in his mouth.

There were two adventures which we must describe in Captain Warren's own words. He was endeavouring to verify the conjecture that he had come upon one of the overflow-aqueducts from the Temple of Solomon, and that there might be a water-conduit underneath. "We scrambled along for a long way on our feet, our skulls and spines coming in unhappy contact with the passage roof. After advancing thus for about 200 feet, we found that the mud reached higher up, and we had to crawl by means of elbows and toes. Gradually the passage got more and more filled up, and our bodies could barely squeeze through, and there did not appear to be sufficient air to support us for any length of time; so that, having advanced 400 feet, we commenced a difficult retrograde movement, having to get back half-way before we could turn our heads round." He thus describes his exploration of the subterranean passage extending under the Via Dolorosa, from the Convent of the Sisters of Zion, which had been entered some years before by Captain Wilson:—"I have examined the hitherto unexplored passage cut in the rock at the southern end. I got some planks, and made a perilous journey on the sewage for about twelve feet, and found myself in a magnificent passage cut in

the rock, thirty feet high, and covered by large stones laid across. Seeing how desirable it would be to trace out this passage, I obtained three doors, and went down there to-day with Sergeant Birtles. We laid them down on the surface of the sewage, and advanced along by lifting up the hindermost and throwing it in front of us." Afterwards, a second subterranean passage was found, and he thus describes his examination of a part of it:—"For about seventy-five feet this passage is a pool of water about six feet deep, the water coming up to about two feet below the springing. We had to construct a raft, floated with inflated skins, to enable us to examine this portion of the vault."

These brave workers, in fact, went to their daily toils "with their lives in their hands," and it was impossible that they should always come out scathless. We have seen it stated that more than fifty accidents took place during the excavations. One day a labourer would be dragged out crushed and bleeding; another day some one would be buried in the ruins, and only extricated in time to save his life. The same spirit was at work in these men as has borne others through the perils of a forlorn hope, or carried adventurous voyagers to the frozen seas around the Pole. A yet more sacred enthusiasm glowed in the breasts of some of them. Many will say that it required discoveries of no common value to reward such ventures and toils, prolonged until failing health compelled both leaders and men to desist. But very precious fruits for sacred archæology have already been gathered and garnered. In estimating these, it is necessary to remember that in many instances Captain Warren has helped forward investigations which he has not completed, but which will enable future explorers to start at the point at which he left them. In not a few other cases, he has increased the probability of previous conjectures, and carried us many degrees nearer to the goal of certainty.

Even his incidental discoveries of articles mainly of domestic

use among the ancient inhabitants of Jerusalem, were something more than mere things for curiosity to wonder at, as in the house-lamps, the beautifully coloured glass vases, the stone weights, and the numerous fragments of pottery. The lamp found among the rubbish under the pavement on the southern side of the Haram, bearing the inscription, "The light of Christ shines on all," and which is thought to belong to the third or fourth century, is an object to linger over with interest. One likes to think of the hands that, two millenniums back, may have handled that well-preserved "seal of Haggai the son of Shebaniah." Again, the stone-roller, dug out far down from a heap of miscellaneous rubbish, is of value to the Biblical student, as bearing on the question of the structure of the houses in Old Jerusalem. It is of the same construction in every way as the stone-rollers to be seen on the flat roofs of the houses in Lebanon at the present day, which are used for the purpose of keeping the roof smooth, compact, and solid. Such rollers naturally suggest the existence of flat-roofed houses in Jerusalem in far remote centuries, as the language and allusions of our Lord in many places imply that they were.

Captain Warren is right in speaking of the whole rubbish around the Haram wall as "interesting débris;" for it seems scarcely possible to doubt that, were it examined and searched in detail, as it will be one day, there would be found many unmistakable fragments and ornaments of the ancient temple, not improbably even many broken weapons of war. It seems far from improbable that in one tunnel, whose course he traced, he had come upon the conduit by which the blood and offal were carried from the temple-altar into the Kidron; and that in another spacious subterranean passage he had discovered the secret road mentioned by Josephus, by which Herod conducted troops from the citadel in the upper quarter of the city, to check disturbance and riot in the open space before the temple gate; while it is beyond doubt that he has found the

true bed of the Kidron brook thirty-eight and a half feet below the present false bed. There is ample evidence that even yet the water flows along, and often fills this true bed, at the rainy season.

This ardent explorer has, in common with his accomplished predecessor, thrown a flood of light upon the water-supply of the Jerusalem of the past. In the remains of enormous tanks and artificial pools, some of them almost having the dimensions of lakes; in the engineering skill which is shown, at once for the prevention of waste and for the outflow of surplus water, which their explorations have revealed, we are enabled to read with new interest and admiration, and also with much clearer understanding, the condensed references in sacred history to the elaborate arrangements of Solomon and Hezekiah. It is the strongest testimony to the science and grandeur of their work, that in all the seventeen sieges to which Jerusalem has been subjected since the days of her kings, her defenders and people have never suffered from the want of water. There were many places noticed by these explorers which had evidently been draw-wells; and the marks made by the buckets, as they were let down and drawn up, could still be traced. This subject is very far from being exhausted. There are questions which wait to be answered, both in reference to the sources of the water and the means by which it was effectually concealed from the enemy during periods of siege; but these two men have done more than any others, both to open up this field of investigation and to cultivate it.

Captain Warren has also made solid additions to our knowledge regarding the bridge which anciently spanned the Tyropœan Valley. The entire history of discovery on this subject is indeed a remarkable example of investigation carried forward, from one step to another, to an ultimate issue which sets the whole matter at rest. By one traveller a spring of the arch was discovered on one side of the ravine; by another, a corresponding spring was discovered on the other side; and then

Captain Warren entered on the field, and not only revised and confirmed the previous conclusions, but, some fathoms down, discovered, lying in order, on an old pavement, the stones or voussoirs that had composed the arch. And as he dug downward to find the original bed of the valley, he came on the unmistakable fragments of another arch of much greater antiquity. Looking up from the depths of this valley along the immense stretch of the Haram wall, the view of the temple must have been a sight of wondrous beauty. Captain Wilson has helped our conceptions by asking us to imagine a building longer than York Minster standing on an elevation loftier than that of our highest city towers, and dazzling, like a glory, in its singular whiteness and purity.

Those recent explorations have not set at rest the question regarding the site of the Jewish Temple. But they have done much to narrow the field of inquiry. They have given the answer to questions which will hasten the answer to the great question of all. The greater part of the exploratory work has been accomplished, which is necessary to be made outside the Haram walls. It is now a settled point that the site of the Temple was somewhere within the boundaries of the Haram Sanctuary. It is considered almost as certain that the temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Herod stood on the same site, though Herod, ambitious of ornament and splendour, may have extended the wings of his temple further in some directions. And it is difficult to repress the belief, that were men of the energy and ability of those recent explorers only allowed to bore their shafts and to drive their tunnels within the Haram area, as *they* have been allowed to do around its outer walls, the great archæological problem would soon be solved. Captain Warren has indicated as a high probability that these inquiries, when they are carried out, will fix the site of the ancient Temple on a position nearly coincident with the Dome of the Rock platform,—the unexplored 600 feet of wall south

of the Golden Gate and overlooking the Kidron, corresponding with what was the eastern side of the holy house; and he has stated tests by which his opinion may be put to the proof, when once the space now guarded by Mohammedan exclusiveness is allowed to be pierced by the rod of Science, and made to let its secret out.

We happened to be in Jerusalem at the time when the red-paint characters at the south-east angle of the Haram wall were discovered, some of which our fellow-traveller Mr. Deutsch declared to be special masons'-marks or quarry-signs. Some weeks afterwards, at Beyrout, Mr. Deutsch announced to us, on his return from a short excursion to Tyre and Sidon, that he had found similar characters on the stones of the substructures of those old Phœnician harbours. The coincidence must be acknowledged as significant between this and the Scripture statement, that Phœnician workmen were employed by Solomon in great numbers in preparing stones for the house which he had resolved to build as the earthly dwelling-place of Jehovah. In reporting on similar painted marks discovered on the north-east angle of the Haram wall, Captain Warren called attention to the evidence which these marks afforded that the stones had been shaped at the quarry and brought prepared for building. In one instance the paint had run, and the trickling was upward in reference to the present position of the stone. Indeed, all the noticeable facts and specialities unite to confirm the inspired record that "the house, when it was in building, was built of stone made ready before it was brought thither."

The design of this chapter has restricted our observations almost entirely to Jerusalem. But we shall be carrying out the real intention of our statements if we make a closing reference to the discovery of the Moabite stone within the borders of the ancient land of Moab, as a rebuke to the unreasoning impatience of some when brilliant results do not turn up with every spadeful of earth, and an encouragement to the prosecution

of this great and sacred exploratory enterprise. That stone, found unexpectedly on the surface of the earth, and with its inscriptions for the most part in a wonderful state of preservation, has, in many ways, been an immense gain. It is by some centuries the oldest Semitic lapidary inscription that has yet been discovered, bearing our thoughts back nine hundred years before Christ, to the period of the Hebrew monarchy. It illustrates, to a previously unheard of degree, the history of our own alphabetic writing. And though, in consequence of mismanagement at the first, which, if we do not severely blame, we must profoundly regret, we do not now possess the stone in its original entireness, it is, even in its fragmentary state, a historic monument of much interest and high value. Written, as it has been said, from a Moabite point of view, it harmonizes at every part with what is recorded in 2nd Kings, chap. iii., respecting Mesha, king of Moab. It is incontestable that it contains the names of Omri, the contemporary king of Israel, and also of the wicked Ahab; those of several Moabite and Israelitish towns; those of the idols Chemosh and Moloch; and, above all, that of Jahveh, or Jehovah, God of Israel. But in addition to the great intrinsic value of this old monument, the simple fact of its discovery at the time invested it with no small relative importance. There was a growing disappointment, both among scholars and the general public that were looking on, that no inscriptions of any magnitude had yet been found. While miles of inscription of even older date had been brought to light on the tombs and temples of Egypt and in the palaces of Nineveh, Palestine and its border-countries seemed to be empty of palæographical treasures, when this rich record appeared at the seasonable moment, and led to the natural conclusion that if even the surface of the land could present such records, more might be hidden underground. Those green mounds, which every traveller may see in Palestine and in the Lebanon valleys, in all likelihood preserve ruins which

only need the divining-rod of Science to bring them to the surface, startling expectation, confirming faith, casting new gleams of light upon many an inspired sentence, and causing "truth," as it were, "to spring out of the earth, while righteousness looks down from heaven."

IX.

Our Walk to Bethany.

Mount of Olives—Biblical recollections—The olive's tenacity of the soil—David's flight over the mountain [2 Sam. xiv., xv.]—*The mosque—Clumsy tradition—Signal-point—Objects on which Jesus looked—Solitudes for prayer—Wanderings—The damsel in the almond-tree—Bethany—Its present appearance—The holy sisters—The garden of Lazarus—Clamorous guides—Incredulity—The Jericho road—Locality of Lazarus' grave—House of Simon—Spot of the ascension* [Luke xxiv. 50]—*The triumphal entry—Bethphage* [Luke xix. 29–38]—*The weeping Redeemer* [Luke xix. 41, 42]—*The great prophecy* [Matt. xxiv.]—*Jerusalem as Jesus saw it—Cursing of the fig-tree* [Matt. xxi. 18–20]—*Interesting discovery—Explanations—Jerusalem the golden* [Isa. ix. 14, 15].

E made various excursions from Jerusalem to sacred spots at a convenient distance; and one of the most memorable of these was to that Bethany, about fifteen furlongs, or two miles distant, which supplied a calm retreat and genial home to Jesus during his ministries in the guilty city. It was not Bethany alone, however, but the Mount of Olives,—over which we must pass in going and returning,—which stirred our interest to its highest pitch; for of all the mountains in the world, this green Olivet, rising immediately to the east of the city, more than two hundred feet above the highest point on Mount Moriah, is the richest in hallowed associations. Every part of it is holy ground. It has been described as "an everlasting altar, with its equally everlasting memories both of words and deeds." Remembering that the scene of our Redeemer's agony was on one part of it, and the place of his ascension on another; that on this mount he held some of his most valuable conversations with his disciples, and uttered his greatest pro-

phecies; that it was the scene of his meek triumphal entry, and of "the Redeemer's tears wept over lost souls;" that his morning and evening walks were along those very paths; and that its ancient olive-groves and heaths witnessed his solitary wrestlings and midnight prayers—for "in the evening he went out unto the Mount of Olives, and continued all night in prayer to God;"—it was impossible, as we walked and wandered on it, not to feel a kind of sabbatic solemnity coming over our spirit, and our voice hushed as if we were treading the pavement of a temple. One cherished friend, a professor from one of our Scottish universities, accompanied us on our walk.

Passing on our right the thrice sacred Gethsemane, we ascended almost straight up the face of the mountain, through little corn-fields, over grassy plats and naked rocks, and past solitary olive-trees. We were struck with the amazing tenacity with which this tree vindicates its right to its paternal soil. We meet with distinct indications in more than one passage in the Old Testament, of its growth on this mountain to which it has given its name, eleven hundred years before Christ; and though every tree within many miles around Jerusalem was hewn down by the soldiers of Titus, both for the purposes of siege and of fuel, here is this hardy evergreen, self-sown, or springing fresh from its old roots, living through all changes, and refusing to yield to the common law of destruction. But in the days of Jerusalem's greatness, an inhabitant looking across the narrow gorge to Olivet would have seen mingling in the picture with the prevailing olive, the fragrant myrtle, the feathery palm, and the white-blossoming almond.

We were now ascending, it is likely, by the very road by which David went up when he fled, weeping and barefooted, from the conspiracy of that heartless Absalom, whom he had "loved not wisely but too well." It needed little effort of imagination to conceive the various movements of the royal exile with his chivalrous band of followers, so graphically

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described in 2 Samuel xiv., xv.; his act of solemn worship, when he had reached the mountain summit, and his sorrowful look as he turned the ridge and bade farewell to his beloved Jerusalem, it might be for the last time; his interview, soon after he had begun to descend the further side of the hill, with the attached and faithful Hushai; the seasonable yet selfish presents brought by Mephibosheth's servant; the curses and insults of the base Shimei; and all the long and wearisome flight through the hot and sandy wilderness, until the deep and impetuous Jordan stretched between him and a people misguided and frenzied by the flatteries and false promises of "him who was his own blood."

On the highest point of the mountain there is a Turkish mosque, with its usual tall and lance-like minaret; and, quite at hand, there is a little chapel marking the traditional spot of our Lord's ascension to heaven. We did not enter, though we were tempted by the clumsy promise of showing us, on a rock within, the last footprints of the Saviour before he took his upward flight to the skies. We knew that the whole invention was in direct contradiction to the express words of the evangelist Luke, who tells us that Jesus "led out his disciples as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." Bethany was yet fully a mile distant. Yet this top of Olivet had its own associations of special interest to us, especially on two accounts. It was the point from which men in olden times sent forth from the Temple, watched for the earliest appearance of the new moon; and as soon as they caught the first glimpse of its thin, silvery crescent, they signalled the fact to the priests in the Temple and to the inhabitants of the city, probably either by the waving of torches or the sounding of trumpets. And it was interesting to realize from this point the objects that must often have met the gaze of Jesus, as he occasionally went back from Jerusalem by

this way to Bethany. Immediately beneath where he stood and looked there were probably at that time gardens and orchards sending up their fragrance from the valley in the evening breeze. Far beyond this there rose, like a black-mailed giant, the famous Frank mountain, where was the fortress and afterwards the tomb of the brilliant, wicked, cruel Herod. The dark-brown hills of the Judean desert would be seen stretching away to the line of the Jordan, whose course could be distinctly traced by a living strip of green; while, further south, his eye would fall on the sparkling waters of the Dead Sea; beyond which there rose, like a lofty wall adorned by the most exquisite purple tints, the mountains of Moab, among whose many peaks he would recognize that of Pisgah, from which Moses obtained his first and last glimpse of the Promised Land, type of that better Canaan, that kingdom of heaven, which He was to open to all believers.

We found the further side of Olivet, to which we had now come, almost without trees; but it was covered with a beautiful shrub, which reminded us of the heather of our own native hills. How silent and solitary was this part of the mountain! Was it in such spots as these that our Redeemer found a quiet retreat for prayer, away from Jerusalem's browbeatings and blasphemies, looking up into that star-lit firmament, and hearing no sounds but those of Nature, ever loyal to her God? But where was Bethany? Looking around us, we could see neither village nor house, nor human being of any kind. In our musings, we had gone somewhat out of our way; and it turned out that the object of our search, on a little off-shoot of the mountain, was now effectually concealed from us by a high intervening ridge. Being without a guide, we were quite at a loss on which side to turn. Listening, we at length heard the sound of a young female singing. We went in the direction of the voice, and found that it came from a little damsel, who was busy gathering nuts from a solitary almond-tree, and putting

them in her long white veil. Perhaps she might be our guide to Bethany. We held up a piece of money to her, and called out again and again the modern name of the village, "El-Lazarieh,"—the town of Lazarus. She evidently supposed at first that we wished to buy her nuts, and offered us the whole of her gatherings in exchange for our small coin. But, taking a few of them and giving her the piece of money, we continued repeating, "El-Lazarieh, El-Lazarieh." At last she caught our meaning, as we saw by her brightening countenance; and tripping before us up a steep ascent, and through the midst of gardens on either side of our path, she soon had us standing in the centre of Bethany.

Were we to confine our notice to the village itself, with its twenty or thirty gray stone houses, many of them half in ruins, we should be able to say nothing in its praise. But when we think of its situation in that quiet nook at the extremity of Olivet on the one side, and almost touching the moor-like wilderness on the other, with gardens stretching out in more than one direction, and a green mountain-crest rising up behind; and when we consider how different it must have looked in the days of its prosperity, we can scarcely imagine a more suitable retreat for Jesus than this mountain hamlet, after the oppositions and controversies and sorrows of a day in Jerusalem. There were specimens of ancient sculpture and bas-reliefs in marble shown us as having belonged to the house of Lazarus. Whatever there may have been in this, these specimens proved, at all events, how very superior many of the houses of ancient Bethany must have been to anything we now meet with in the poor modern village. There are various hints in the evangelical narrative which make it certain that Lazarus and his two sisters, Martha and Mary, were in good worldly circumstances. We could therefore picture Lazarus in a garden, such as one of those which we had passed on entering Bethany, busily engaged in binding up his vines, watching the fig-tree sending forth its

tender shoots, and pruning the branches of the luscious pomegranate; and then, when the sun had gone far down in the west, going out on the Jerusalem road to meet that Friend whose presence brought heaven with it into his home. The holy sisters were ready with their quiet ministries and respectful attentions, and, above all, with their listening, wondering delight in his heavenly lessons; and in that element of devout love, gleams of sunshine began to fall on the grieved spirit of "the Man of sorrows."

Of course, there were clamorous guides on the spot, ready to show us in a tall ruined tower in the centre of the village, "the Castle of Lazarus;" and also to take us, with lantern in hand, more than twenty slimy steps down to his supposed tomb. The house of Simon the leper was also pointed out; and we were even assured that they had waiting for our inspection—price so many piastres, if we would only go and see it—the barren fig-tree which our Lord had cursed! But as we showed a decided resistance to this kind of penance, and would rather pay a moderate bucksheesh without it, they became weary at length of their importunity. How thankful we often were that the Empress Helena, and the credulous or lying monks that followed her, had not been able to obliterate the rocks, and valleys, and everlasting hills.

But we were rewarded a hundredfold for our walk to Bethany. First, we were able to trace with absolute certainty, for a distance at least of half a mile, the road from Jericho, along which the people must have recognized our Lord as coming with his apostolic band, after the death and burial of his friend Lazarus; so that they had time to go and apprize Martha of his approach, while he was yet in the precincts of the village. Then, though it will never be possible to identify the actual locality of Lazarus' grave, yet surely it was enough to be certain that somewhere within the little circle on which we were now looking, our Lord had performed his greatest miracle, in raising Lazarus

from the dead, when his humanity and his Godhead had shone out from the same fact in unsurpassed effulgence. Oh! those blessed tears of Jesus, wept before that rocky tomb, consecrating sorrow for the dead, sanctifying sympathy with the living! Oh! the divine power of that voice, compelling Death to yield up its prey, giving pledge to the Church of the great general awakening, and helping faith to hear every day at the mouth of his people's open graves, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." The guests of the grateful Simon must have looked out from some dwelling in this upland village on those grassy knolls where a few lambs were now playing, on that memorable afternoon, when Jesus and the Bethany family were present at his feast; and when Mary's deep and silent love found expression in anointing her Saviour's feet with that precious spikenard, whose fragrance, like his own gospel, was to fill the world and to spread through all time. Then was that great principle of Christ's kingdom made immortal, that—

> "Love delights to bring her best;
> And where love is, that offering evermore is blest."

Then, with our New Testament open in our hands, we were quite certain that the scene of our Lord's ascension must have been somewhere very near to Bethany; and we had ventured to whisper our impression that a round lofty eminence near the entrance to the village may have been the selected spot from which that triumphal flight took place up to the heavenly temple. And we were gratified to find that this was the conjecture of Dr. Barclay and of many others who had long been resident in Jerusalem, and were familiar with every place in its neighbourhood. It is a beautiful eminence, green at its summit; "almond and apricot trees in rich blossom, spreading like the skirt of a beautiful robe in a half-circle round its base." Was this then the meeting-place between earth and heaven—the scene of the last benediction of Jesus as his blessed feet ceased to touch the green-sward,—the centre point in the old world,

where his disciples and his Church received their great commission: "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature"?

We returned by the road which winds along the southern side of the Mount of Olives, and which is generally believed to have been the path of our Lord's triumphal entry into Jerusalem. With that memorable event fully before our mind, it was pleasing to remark how perfectly the scenery and the recorded incidents fitted in to each other. The narrative of John leads us to suppose that a considerable number of Jews who had come out to Bethany to see Jesus on account of the report of the great miracle of the resurrection of Lazarus, accompanied him and his disciples back to the city on the morning of that eventful day. Jesus had already purposed that on that occasion he should approach and enter Jerusalem with the ensigns of a meek royalty; but as yet no animal had been provided on which he could ride in kingly state; and we learn from the Gospel that, at an early part of his journey, he pointed two of his disciples to a little village which was visible from the road; told them that, on going to it, they should find an ass bound with her colt; and that, on obtaining the ready consent of their owner—who was probably a secret disciple—they were to loose them and bring them to him. Now, it is a curious circumstance that for a time the path, soon after leaving Bethany, skirts along a ravine, on the opposite side of which, not far up the mountain, there are the ruins of a village; and supposing this to have been the place to which Jesus directed the two disciples, they would be able to cross the ravine by a short route, to carry out their Master's instructions, and be ready to meet him and his company by the time that they had wound their way to the same point by the regular path. It further appears that our Lord rode on the colt, which was mature and strong enough for the purpose, conforming in this arrangement to the custom of kings to ride in procession on animals on which never man be-

fore had sat, and also to the very letter of that beautiful ancient prophecy, "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass." It was a striking coincidence that on our walk along this hill-side path—the identical path on which those prophetic words were verified—we met a man riding on a beautiful colt, the mother-ass coming up immediately behind him with a well-filled pannier on either side.

We were rewarded by another Biblical illustration, to which we attached some value, on this day's return from Bethany. Though, as we have seen, the olive is the prevailing tree on every part of the mountain that is wooded, yet on the sides of this road we met with an occasional hawthorn, promising soon to scent the air with its delicate perfume, and also here and there with a fig-tree. It was impossible not to be reminded of the barren fig-tree on this same roadside, on which our Lord, on another day in that last week of his humiliation-life, pronounced the withering curse, which immediately leaped forth into effect; for "how soon," exclaimed the awe-struck apostle, "is the fig-tree withered away." But it was not the mere spectacle of the fig-tree growing, as of old, on the margin of this particular road, that so much impressed us. We were ruminating on the difficulty which has been occasioned by the explanation of the evangelist, "For the time of figs was not yet" —an explanation which, instead of accounting for our Lord's action, seems most of all to need to be explained; for if it was not yet the time of figs, why did our Lord come up to the tree as if he had every reason to expect that he should find figs on it? We had met with no solution of the difficulty which seemed to us so entirely satisfactory as that suggested by the present Archbishop of Dublin in his "Notes on Miracles;" while his interpretation has the additional merit of greatly intensifying

the lesson of the incident, which was designed to be a kind of enacted parable.

While adverting to the well-known fact in the natural history of the fig-tree, that its fruit appears before its foliage, and therefore that when such a tree was seen covered with leaves, it was reasonable to look for fruit underneath them; and then to the statement of the evangelist, which seems so far at variance with this, that the time of the year for gathering the fig crop had not yet arrived,—he ingeniously suggests that while this was no doubt commonly the case at the season of the Passover when the miracle was performed, yet, perchance, on some nook on a mountain-side where a fig-tree was protected from violent winds, had a favourable exposure to the sun's rays, and enjoyed all the selectest influences of Nature, it might sometimes be a month in advance of the other fig-trees all around it—green and bushy with foliage, while those in less genial positions were only beginning to send forth their first tender buds; and that in the case of such a tree, with so much pretence and promise, a hungry wayfarer would certainly come up to it expecting to gather fruit in abundance. Such a tree, our Lord intended to indicate, had been the Jewish Church, with its distinguishing religious privileges, its temple, its priesthood, its typical observances, its separation from the surrounding heathenism, its special covenant, its written oracles of God. It was natural to come expecting much holy fruit from a Church so favoured, so pretentious, with so much of the foliage of profession about it. But it was all foliage and no fruit—barren as the shores of yonder Dead Sea. And now it was about to be given over to destruction, abandoned to perpetual unfruitfulness, withered up by the roots.

Such is the solution which has been given of the acknowledged difficulty, and it is remarkable that in walking along this same Bethany road we came upon just such a precocious fig-tree. It was, in all likelihood, the very road on which our

Lord had travelled; it was the same week in the year, for it was the Passover week when we were on Olivet; and while in general the few fig-trees that we saw were showing little more than the first signs of life, there was one more favourably placed, which was several weeks in advance of all the others, all green with foliage, and with ripe fruit underneath it. We plucked a branch and brought it home with us to Scotland. The large leaves had shrivelled, but the fruit was still sweet, even to the smell, when we opened our package two months afterwards.

Our thoughts, as we journeyed slowly onward, soon returned to Christ's triumphal entry. At a particular point in the ascending path, Jerusalem bursts upon you in a moment, as if it had sprung like a vision from the earth,—Mount Zion, the ancient city of David, being the loftiest part of the picture. So it must have been on that memorable morning. The sight stimulates the pent-up enthusiasm of the disciples, which is at once caught up by the multitude, and Olivet begins to ring with their responsive shouts, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest." Meanwhile a larger multitude is coming up the mountain from Jerusalem, each bearing a palm-branch in his hand, to meet the King of Zion, and to swell his triumph. As the two streams meet, the joy is deepened and the hosannas are multiplied. In their holy transport, the people unloose their garments and spread them in his path; green boughs torn from the neighbouring trees bestrew his way as he rides on in his meek benignant majesty. And still they cleave the welkin with their jubilant notes, as they now descend towards the city, a mighty stream of joyful life. Jesus has freely yielded himself up to the joy of the moment; but as he draws nearer to Jerusalem and beholds it, the current of his thoughts is changed, and gladness gives place to profoundest compassion. He has looked into its not far distant future, and his gait is slackened, and over that doomed murderess-city he

sheds divine tears. "If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes."

As we stood far up on the mountain-side, the path by which that rejoicing throng wound their way was all before us. We could imagine them skirting round Gethsemane, passing over the Kidron brook, moving up the steep ascent on the other side, entering by the beautiful Golden-gate into the city, many of the pilgrims with their palm-branches dispersing themselves over the crowded streets; while Jesus, with his disciples and others of the multitude, passes into the Temple, and is welcomed by the hosannas of the children, which drown the querulous complaints of the Pharisees and the envious murmurings of the priests, while they accomplish ancient prophecy, and forecast in miniature his ultimate kingly triumphs, when "every knee shall bow to him," and "the whole earth shall be filled with his glory."

We still lingered on the Mount of Olives; and leaving the road and passing nearer to the centre of the mountain, sat down, over against the city, on a ledge of limestone-rock that protruded from the soil and formed a natural seat for us. It must have been on such a spot that Jesus sat with his four selected disciples—Peter, and James, and John, and Andrew—when he told them of the signs of Jerusalem's coming destruction, and gave them such wise directions for the conduct of the Christians when those signs of the terrible catastrophe showed themselves, as effected their universal deliverance. Our friend read aloud our Lord's great prophecy, along with the prophetic words of his lament spoken on the previous day; and the impression of his words—read, perhaps, on the very spot on which He had spoken them—was singularly solemn. The city was distinctly mapped out before us in that clear, dry atmosphere; it almost seemed to lie at our feet. We could distinguish each house, and dome, and minaret; we could almost

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have counted the stones in its walls. We have somewhere seen its present appearance from Olivet described as like that of "a penitent standing clothed in sackcloth and ashes—so gray, so depressed, so insignificant its appearance." But when Jesus looked forth upon it from this mountain-side, it must still have retained very much of its olden magnificence. Its beautiful Temple, white and glittering in the sunlight; the Castle of Antonia; the palaces of Herod and Pilate; its many public buildings and monuments; its line of triple walls, with their frowning fortresses; and, on that occasion, its million of inhabitants seen on the roofs of its houses and crowding its streets; —how difficult it was to associate with such a spectacle the picture of an early destruction such as the world had never before seen, or would again see! But even as the natural eye of Jesus looked across the narrow chasm of Kidron upon the splendid city, so did his prophetic eye then look across the chasm of forty years and see it a heap of ruins, black with fire or red with carnage, while he described the whole with a minuteness of detail and a graphic distinctness surpassing every other prediction in the Word of God. That Mount Scopus was full in view by which Titus was to approach the city, and where the Roman eagles, the symbols alike of destruction and idolatry, "the abomination which maketh desolate," would first be seen by the infatuated Jew looking forth from his walls. And still the refrain of his awful prophecy was, "Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled." How heavily has the curse fallen! Jerusalem is at this hour a Jewish poorhouse or prison, of which the Mohammedan holds the key.

"Trodden down
By all in turn—Pagan and Frank and Tartar;
So runs the dread anathema: trodden down
Beneath the oppressor; darkness shrouding thee
From every blessed influence of Heaven;—
Thus hast thou lain for ages, iron-bound
As with a curse. Thus art thou doomed to lie,
Yet not for ever."

No; there is a limit to this burden, even in the very bosom of the prophecy. It has been truly said that not Rome, but Jerusalem, is to be the Eternal City. Christianity shall yet come back to her birth-place, and she shall bring every other blessing in her hand when she brings herself, the first and best of all—good government, agriculture, commerce, science, art, order, wealth, peace. The dew shall yet descend on Hermon. Carmel shall yet laugh with abundance. The cedars of Lebanon shall yet clap their hands. Zion shall yet ring again with the psalms of her own king and bard, and Jerusalem shall become the praise of the whole earth. "The sons of them that afflicted thee shall come bending unto thee; and all they that despised thee shall bow themselves down at the soles of thy feet; and they shall call thee, The city of the Lord, The Zion of the Holy One of Israel. Whereas thou hast been forsaken and hated, so that no man went through thee, I will make thee an eternal excellency, a joy of many generations. I the Lord will hasten it in its time."

X.

Our Ride to Bethlehem.

Scenes on the way—Convent of Elias—First sight of Bethlehem [Micah v. 2]—*Beautiful tradition—Rachel's tomb* [Gen. xxxv. 16–20]—*Light on the Bible* [Jer. xxxi. 15; Matt. ii. 17, 18]—*A picture* [Luke x. 22]—*Scenes of Ruth's history* [Ruth i., ii.]—*Modern salutations—David the shepherd—Unconscious education* [1 Sam. xvi. 20]—*Entrance into Bethlehem—Appearance of its streets—Church of the Nativity—Cautious reception—Cave of the Nativity—Probabilities—Early records—Public khans—Song of the shepherds* [Luke ii. 8–14]—*Worship of the Magi* [Matt. ii. 9–11]—"*Massacre of the Innocents*"—*Jerome's oratory—The Lady Paula—Chanting of the Greek monks—A market in which we are the only purchaser—Solomon's gardens* [Eccles. ii. 4–6]—*Queen of Sheba—Mistake corrected—Mr. Meshullam—Gardens of Urtas.*

WE had lingered over the scenes of the Agony, the Crucifixion, the Resurrection, and the Ascension; and we had yet to visit the place which was associated with the glorious mystery of the Incarnation of Christ. That was a day to be ever afterwards noted in our memory with a white mark, which brought us to the birth-place of Him who was to be the Light and Hope of the world.

As Bethlehem was two hours, or six miles, distant from Jerusalem, this was an excursion only to be accomplished on horseback. Passing out by the Jaffa-gate, and winding by a rough zigzag path down the gorge of Hinnom, we were soon out into the open upland country, and moving almost directly southward. There were no roads, in our English sense of the word; but there were twenty narrow paths to choose between. The bare limestone-rock usually protruded itself, and formed a very uneven pavement; but at intervals there were little patches of

soil covered with wild-flowers, in which the ranunculus and the scarlet anemone abounded, such as must often have delighted the eye of Hasselquist, the amiable martyr-botanist of Palestine. And there were blossoming gardens not far off on either side, in which you could hear the song of the native bullfinch, with its scarlet crest around its bill. Multitudes of red-legged partridges also crossed our path at times;—and these sights and sounds, with the refreshing air and the bright sunlight, made our ride, even apart from its chief object, most enjoyable.

A little more than mid-way from Jerusalem, we passed the Greek convent of Elias. It is a large and imposing structure, surrounded by high walls which also inclose attractive gardens, and it professes to mark the spot where Elijah found shelter under a juniper-tree on his flight to the desert. But the sacred narrative, which places the scene where the wearied and dejected prophet lay down to rest, and perhaps to die, a long day's journey further southward, is directly in the face of this tradition. We believe there is less of fiction in what is usually reported of the hospitality of the convent.

A little beyond this sacred house, and at a sharp turn in the road, we lost sight of Jerusalem, and at the same moment Bethlehem broke on our view. That, then, had been the great meeting-place between earth and heaven—the spot where divinity and humanity became one in the person of our incarnate Lord! We reined in our horse, and stood still for a time to look on it. It stretches along the crest of a mountain of considerable height,—the Church or Convent of the Nativity, with its connected buildings, covering the loftiest part of the eminence, and looking, at the distance from which we then saw it, a great deal more like a fortress than a church. Vineyards and olive-gardens elaborately terraced, and, as they appeared to us through our glass, carefully cultivated, stretched down the sides of the mountain from the village to the valley far beneath. As it filled our minds with its grandly sacred memories, we

could not help addressing it aloud in those words of Micah: "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall He come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting." We thought that if that little town, because of an event which once took place in it, could thus be invested with an interest which for nineteen centuries had drawn to it innumerable pilgrims from every part of the earth, and gathered around it the thoughts of the human family, might there not be worlds in like manner among the countless stars—"little among the thousands" of the sky—which held a somewhat similar place, because they had been the chosen scene of great divine manifestations, and which angels, in their flights through the universe, often paused to look upon?

We met with various traditions respecting places on this road, the greater number of which were puerile and absurd enough. But one seemed to us to possess a kind of mystic beauty which a poet like Quarles, or even George Herbert, would have readily turned into a spiritual allegory. They show you a fountain at which the wise men from the East lay down greatly dispirited, because their guiding star had not been seen by them for many days. But as they stooped down to the fountain to quench their thirst, they saw the friendly light reflected in its waters; and welcoming again the divine token, followed on in the path which it illuminated, and were soon after bending and worshipping before the "Desire of all nations" who had come.

But what is that white cupola-roofed building which we see at some little distance to our right? It is the tomb of Rachel the wife of Jacob and the mother of Joseph and Benjamin. We are now on the very scene of which we read so far back in the Book of Genesis, that "when there was a little way to come to Ephrath, Rachel gave birth to a son." "And it came to pass as her soul was in departing (for she died), that she called his

name Benoni; but his father called him Benjamin. And Rachel died, and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem. And Jacob set a pillar upon her grave; that is the pillar of Rachel's grave unto this day." The covering over the grave has often been destroyed and rebuilt since that time; the present erection is in the well-known Saracenic style of architecture; but all travellers are agreed that here for once we have certainty, and that this building really marks the spot where that mother of patriarchs was buried. To Jewish women, especially, it is, to this day, one of the most sacred places in Palestine. They believe Rachel to be the type of maternity in its suffering and love, and to have the power of invoking blessings on their children on the earth. And therefore, at every new moon they gather around her grave, and by songs and lamentations put honour on the memory of their illustrious ancestress. There is one familiar passage in Jeremiah which warrants this typical application of Rachel's name. It is quoted by the evangelist Matthew, and used by him to describe Herod's massacre of the infants in Bethlehem and all its borders, in order to compass the destruction of Him who was reported to have been recently born King of the Jews—"In Rama was there a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not." But we suspect the extreme fitness and poetic beauty of this quotation, as applied by Matthew, is in general only half seen. Rama is usually imagined to refer to the Rama of Samuel, a great way distant. But there is a place with ruins and rubbish on it, which lies between Rachel's tomb and Bethlehem, which is called Rama at this day, and which many suppose to have been a kind of suburban village or dependency of the little mountain capital. Let it be remembered that Herod's massacre is expressly said to have extended to the "coasts," or borders, around Bethlehem, and that this Rama must therefore have been within the bloody

landmark; and then we have the wonderfully sublime and touching picture of Rachel, the representative of Hebrew mothers, aroused from her tomb by those inhuman deeds and infant shrieks, and weeping with inconsolable grief over the tyrant's stroke that has made her childless.

As we approached nearer to Bethlehem, we met a considerable stream of people going up to Jerusalem. Probably, the fact that it was the Easter week was drawing many to the city, and to the scenes which were being enacted in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Our notice was particularly attracted by one little company. A husband and wife, cleanly and comfortably dressed, were travelling with one beautiful child. The child was placed in a small cot or cradle on the back of a good-natured donkey, which evidently did not feel its load to be burdensome, and which was neatly adorned by a saddle covered with red morocco leather, and thickly padded in order to make the seat of the infant more comfortable. One of the parents walked on either side of the animal, watching his every motion, lest their little one should receive any harm. We liked the picture of young parental love, and of that smiling creature knitting in one the two hearts by another bond. Was it unnatural or irreverent that, in the circumstances, we should have called to mind Joseph and Mary going up with their wonderful child by the same road so long ago, to "present him before the Lord"?

We were now so near Bethlehem that we could look straight down into the broad valley that lies between the gardens of the town and a range of lofty hills which bounds it northward, the far-off purple-tinted mountains of Moab forming its apparent limit to the east. Down in the valley, there seemed to spread before us the whole scene of the inimitable story of the Book of Ruth—that exquisite miniature representation of divine providence—that sacred drama with its beginning, its middle, and its end. The land near us—part of which had quite recently

been under the plough, while other parts were green with the braird of wheat or barley—was uninclosed, as in those olden times so many thousand years since. It scarcely required an effort of fancy to fill up the scene again with its living figures,—to picture the honest, manly Boaz down on those paternal fields; the jocund reapers plying their busy sickles; poor maidens gleaning behind them; while Ruth, the beautiful stranger from Moab, mingles silently with them, and gathers handfuls in her ample veil, to be taken home to Naomi and beaten out at nightfall. We could even imagine ourselves to hear the kindly salutations that passed at intervals between the genial yeoman and his dependents: "The Lord be with thee," and, "The Lord bless thee," exactly corresponding with the "Allah m'akum" of ordinary greetings in the same region now. We were too early in the season to witness a Bethlehem harvest, though the barley crop was expected to ripen in a few weeks, according to the order indicated in the Book of Ruth. But we were assured that every minute custom painted on that olden canvas remains unchanged, even to the occasional rudeness of the modern fellahin to the unprotected gleaners; for those Bethlehemites are a turbulent race, and when riots occur in Jerusalem at the annual festivals, they are usually the foremost and most fearless in the fray.

And as we turned and looked on those neighbouring hills, with their steep sides and craggy summits, and saw the browsing goats and sheep, how easy it was to imagine the youthful son of Jesse watching his father's flocks up yonder, and at night gazing up with his poet's eye upon the beautiful moon and the silent stars! It was quite the scenery which suited for the natural education of the future poet-king of Israel. We do not indeed believe that nature can produce a poet. It is certain that even unfavourable outward circumstances are unable to repress the "faculty divine" where it exists in much strength. The late James Montgomery wrote some of his best composi-

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tions when looking out from a dingy apartment on a dull brick wall in Sheffield. But nature can do much in developing a poet, in exercising his imagination, and in storing his mind with visions of beauty and grandeur; and it is to the point to notice that the poet whom we have named, always wrote best after an excursion among the finest scenery in Warwick or Derbyshire. We cannot doubt that God silently educated David among those scenes on which we were then looking, for his great work as the chief poet and psalmist of the Church for all time; for men of his temperament receive some of their best and most lasting lessons outside the walls of schools and universities. From those hills he could see at the same moment the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea; he could look down upon the scenes of soft beauty and abundance around Bethlehem, and out upon the wild grandeur of the distant mountains; while he could witness the rapid changes of the seasons and the terrible war of the elements, and hear the voice of God in the roll and crash of the thunder, with allusions to which his psalms abound.

And there was an education by external nature beyond this. The life of a shepherd in those scenes was one of constant hardship and peril. The lion and the bear which lurked among those rocks, or down near the course of those mountain torrents, were a formidable vermin to deal with, and had often to be encountered single-handed; not to speak of occasional raids of Ishmaelites up from the desert, or of Philistines from the west stealing along those long gorges of which Bethlehem was the centre, and hungering for plunder, if not thirsting for blood. Experiences like these familiarized the young shepherd with daring adventure, and drew out in him fertility of resource; while his frequent search after a lost lamb or kid would make him acquainted with all the surrounding regions, would prepare him for the time, not many years distant, when, as the prophetic king of Israel, he would be hunted for his life by the jealous

and ignoble Saul over all that part of Southern Judea, and he would find the advantage of his knowledge of every inaccessible spot, and natural hiding-place, and narrow mountain-pass where a few brave and true men would be able to resist a thousand.

It is a fact worth noting that the presents which Jesse sent by David to Saul, when he was called away from his adventurous shepherd-life to become a minstrel before the king and dispel his moods of melancholy, are the most common products of the district at this hour, such as we should expect to be sent to a sheikh or chief in that neighbourhood now. "Jesse took an ass laden with bread, and a bottle of wine, and a kid, and sent them by David his son unto Saul."

We were now entering Bethlehem. Its name signifies "the house of bread;" and it is rather curious that the first sound we heard, as we passed through its gate, was the cheerful one of the grinding of a mill. The little town is said to contain about four thousand inhabitants, the greater number of whom are Christians of the Greek Church. It is indeed the most Christian town in Palestine, and contains so few of the followers of Mahomet, that it has not even a Moslem quarter. We were struck by its general look of respectability, the comparative superiority of its houses in respect of structure and comfort, and the many picturesque and lively groups of people whom we saw in its principal street as we rode along on our way to the convent. Was it some such group as one of these that recognized the sad and widowed Naomi, as she reappeared suddenly at some corner, after her long absence of ten years? Long before our visit to the Holy Land, Lieutenant Van de Velde had informed us of the contrast in cleanliness and comfort observable throughout all Palestine between a Christian and a Mohammedan village; and every week of our journeyings confirmed his representation. Even a very imperfect form of Christianity lifts a people far above the Moslem standard. When we com-

pared the Christian Bethlehem with the Moslem mud-village of New Jericho, which we saw a few days afterwards, we felt that we were looking upon a state of existence as widely apart as that between a Norwegian cottage and a Hottentot's kraal.

But here we were, at last, at the door of the Church of the Nativity, beneath whose roof, it is affirmed, "Mary brought forth her first-born Son." Ten clamorous Bethlehemites offered to take charge of our quiet ultra-phlegmatic Arab horse. We had some doubts, as we selected one strong fellow for the custody of our charger, with our good saddle and bridle from Scotland, whether we should ever see them again—each of the ten seeming ready to contend for the poor animal as his own lawful prize. But there was nothing for it but to run the hazard.

An iron gate is opened cautiously, by which only one person can enter at a time; and the roof is so low at the entrance that you almost need to bend double in order to gain admission. In all this, it was easy to discern precautions against sudden surprises from Bedouins and others who might have covetous thoughts about the treasures within. To diminish the danger of angry collisions between the different Churches, the sacred house is divided among the Greek, Latin, and Armenian Christians, to each of whom separate parts of the structure are assigned as places of worship and dwellings for the monks. In the portion which has been allotted to the Greek communion, you are shown a marble star on the floor, corresponding, as the monks tell you, to the point in the heavens where the supernatural luminary shone, and directly over the scene of the nativity in the subterranean church beneath. With your curiosity quickened, you descend fifteen steps, and are conducted through a long passage into what was originally a cave or grotto cut out of a limestone-rock on the ridge of the mountain against which this part of the convent abuts; and this, you are assured, is the scene of our Redeemer's birth. It is an apartment of

moderate size and height, everywhere lined and floored with marble. It is illuminated by thirty-two golden lamps, which are kept burning day and night, all of them the gift of Christian princes. The precise spot of the nativity is indicated by a glory in the floor composed of marble and jasper, and encircled by a wreath of silver, around which these words are inscribed, "*Hic de Virgine Maria, Jesus Christus natus est*" (Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary). An altar infixed in the rock spreads over it. The original manger is reported to have been carried to Rome; but at the distance of seven paces another manger is shown, carved out of marble, and corresponding in shape and size to the original. In front of this is the so-called altar of the Magi, on which incense is kept continually burning.

Is this then the actual spot where the Saviour of the world was born, and divinity condescended to become enshrined in our humanity? To judge dispassionately on this question, it is necessary that we first dismiss from our minds the thought of all those misplaced ornaments and monkish inventions with which the place is deformed, and every sign of simplicity and humiliation so completely obliterated, and that we endeavour to reproduce the lowly picture so graphically traced for us by the pen of Luke. But when we have done this, and looked at the evidence which speaks in favour of this spot, we feel that it cannot be dismissed lightly. We must distinguish between late inventions and those early authentic documents out of which history obtains some of her most precious and reliable materials. Now, it is a fact that Justin Martyr, writing somewhat more than a century after the event, and from his native town of Sichem, only forty miles distant,—familiar, we may presume, with the country and with its fresh local traditions,—is most distinct and unhesitating in his statement that the scene of our Lord's birth was in a rock cavity in this old city of David. The fact was repeated through the following centuries by Origen,

Eusebius, Jerome, and others of the early Christian fathers; and many ages before the days of Jerome, this spot was marked off and inclosed within a sacred building as the shrine of the Nativity. What facts are there to set over against these and to displace them?—more especially when it is remembered that in that region, then as now, natural or artificial caverns hewn out of the white limestone-rock were frequently taken advantage of in the formation of human habitations?

As we read the inspired narrative of our Lord's birth in the light of Eastern scenes and customs, it seems to amount to this. There was a public khan or caravanserai in Bethlehem in those days for the accommodation of strangers. We never saw such a khan in modern Palestine; but we afterwards found shelter in one among the Lebanon mountains. We remember there was a court in the centre, where our mules and horses rested and fed. Around this court there were little apartments or cells where travellers could eat and sleep. But sometimes also, as Dr. Kitto mentions, behind those apartments, and on a lower level, there were stalls or recesses where cattle could be sheltered. It was probably to such a place in Bethlehem that Joseph and Mary came, late in the evening, and wearied with their long journey from Nazareth. They found every room in the house already occupied. What were they to do at that late hour, for it was the only caravanserai in the little town? There was a natural cave or arcade formed out of the rock, in which the horses and mules of strangers sometimes received their provender. This was divided into a number of recesses; and in one of these, curtained off from the rest, the young virgin-mother found quiet in the hour of her extremity; and her sorrow was soon turned into great joy by the birth of Him "in whom all the nations of the earth were to be blessed." What a scene for the birth of the Prince of Life! for him who was "in the form of God" to "take upon him the form of a servant!"

"Wrapt in his swaddling bands,
And in his manger laid,
The hope and glory of all lands
Is come to the world's aid.
No peaceful home upon his cradle smiled;
Guests rudely went and came where slept the royal child."

Meanwhile one of those strange contrasts were occurring which marked the whole of Christ's earthly life, and which were not absent from the last and darkest scene of all. In a plain about a mile to the east of Bethlehem, where humble shepherds were watching their flocks at midnight, a herald-angel announced to them the first tidings that the world's great Deliverer had come; and innumerable minstrel-angels spreading in radiant ranks far up into the sky, sang his natal hymn in those glad strains whose responses were given back from heaven, and whose echoes still reverberate through the earth in all Christian hearts: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men." Those shepherd-watchers were probably simple, holy men, who had been trained in those Bethlehem solitudes to devotion, and who had long waited, with straining mental eye and earnest soul, for the "Consolation of Israel." There was profound wisdom in the fact that they should have been honoured to receive the earliest tidings,—shepherds from the lips of angels,—rather than the proud and wrangling leaders of the Jewish sects, who would have abused the trust. And while they have left their flocks and gone to Bethlehem to welcome to earth the Lord of heaven, and to worship at his feet, there are others from a far-off land now journeying across the mountains of Judah, who shall soon be here with their fragrant and golden gifts—the representatives of science, "the first fruits" of the Gentile world. It has been shrewdly said that it is the same order still: simplicity first; and science next, coming with its crowns to lay them down before Him on whose head there shall be many crowns.

"Those who have bowed untaught to Nature's sway,
And they who follow truth along her star-paved way."

INTERIOR OF CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY.

We were guided to other places of interest under the roof of this immense pile. From the supposed tomb of the infants slaughtered by the command of Herod, we turned away with an incredulity which almost tempted us to question what was true. But there is no reason to doubt that the cell shown as the oratory of Jerome was really the apartment where that learned father produced his Latin translation of the Scriptures known as "the Vulgate," and where he also wrote his Commentary. It is interesting to remember that he mentions, when writing on the prophecy of Amos, that he could see from the window of his apartment that Tekoa—six miles distant—which had been the herdsman-prophet's birth-place, and where he had seen his visions and dreamed his dreams. Nor is there any cause to question that that recess contains the tomb of the noble Roman matron, the Lady Paula, the friend of Jerome, who sought refuge from the riot and luxury of Rome in the inn in which her Lord was born; more especially "as she ever loved privacy and a sequestered life, being of the pelicans' nature, which use not to fly in flocks;" who built and endowed three monasteries at Bethlehem,—in her "immoderate bounty" more than impoverishing her own children, and giving occasion to Fuller's shrewd remark: "Sure none need be more bountiful in giving than the sun is in shining, which, though freely bestowing his beams on the world, keeps notwithstanding the body of light to himself; yea, it is necessary that liberality should as well have banks as a stream."

But what cheerful music is that which we hear from some part of this great house—rapid, distinct in every note, and yet softened by distance? It is the chanting of the monks of the Greek Church. Their worship is more gladsome than that of any other of the Churches represented beneath this roof; just as we noticed that, in their temples in other lands, they usually preferred bright colours upon their walls, and streams of light flowing in upon them. The hymns of the Greek Church in

celebration of the Nativity are very ancient and numerous—much more so, it is remarkable, than those on the Crucifixion; and we could almost have believed those lines which Miss Bremer has presented in an English garb to have formed the refrain of that to which we were now listening:

> "Thy birth, O Christ Jesus our God,
> Has caused new light to arise on the world;
> And they come, the star-worshippers,
> By a star guided, to thee."

What a sudden revulsion of thought and feeling we experienced when we emerged through the iron gate into the open air! Our extemporized groom had been faithful, and was waiting patiently for his piastres. But specimens of all the manufactures of Bethlehem were instantly pressed upon us by a whole noisy troop of Bethlehemites: carved olive-wood from the neighbouring gardens; mother-of-pearl with beautiful tracery from the Red Sea, beads and rosaries made of olive-berries, cups and vases formed of stones from the Dead Sea or the Jordan, or of red-spotted marble from quarries near Jerusalem. It was like a fair in which we were the only hapless purchaser.

How much we wished that we could have extended our ride three miles southward, and have visited the famous pools and gardens of Solomon. From the days of Maundrell to our own, travellers have been almost unanimous in identifying these as the places of which that most magnificent of Jewish monarchs writes: "I made me great works; I builded me houses; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and I planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits; I made me pools of water to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees;" and in which, as Leighton says, "he set Nature on the rack to confess its uttermost strength for the delighting and satisfying of man." His three pools or gigantic cisterns, so disposed that the waters of the uppermost may descend into the second, and those of the second into the third, are among the few human works in which actual inspection usually exceeds expec-

tation. One traveller, seeking to give an impression of their extent and magnitude, declares that the surface occupied by them is such that he could not find any point at which all the three could be comprised within one angle of vision; and another informs us that one of them when full would float the largest man-of-war that ever ploughed the ocean. From Solomon's own words, we should conclude that those colossal structures were partly designed for supplying his neighbouring royal gardens with the means of irrigation, saturating his trees with that constant moisture which in such a climate is necessary to fruitfulness. But, beyond this, they were intended for the chief water-supply of his capital; and the aqueduct which he also constructed for connecting the pools with Jerusalem can still be traced in some places, following the many sinuosities of the intervening mountains—certain noble fragments especially appearing as you ascend from the Valley of Hinnom near to the Jaffa-gate. Were these a part of the glory of King Solomon, which, when the Queen of Sheba beheld, "there remained no more spirit in her"?

Many travellers have been greatly mistaken in confining the gardens of Solomon within one narrow valley in the neighbourhood of the pools, and have thus created difficulties for themselves. The saying has been repeated a hundred times in varying phrase, from Maundrell downwards, that "if Solomon made his gardens in the rocky ground which is now assigned to them, he demonstrated greater power and wealth in finishing his design, than wisdom in choosing the place for it." But scientific observation has done much in the department of horticulture since that grand old traveller's days, and has discovered that "the loose, gray, calcareous gravel from those rocky surfaces possesses a fertility exceeding all other kinds of soil for the production of fine fruits." And many things favour the belief that the area included in Solomon's culture had more of the dimensions of a deer-forest than of a common orchard;

that the whole of that region, comprehending many hills and valleys, was one vast blossoming and fragrant garden; and that, standing on some commanding eminence such as the flat roof of Solomon's own summer-palace, you might have seen one valley filled with the fig-tree, another shaded with the clustering vine, and a third darkened by the olive, or bright with the scarlet blossoms of the pomegranate,—the whole supplying the outward imagery of that spiritual love-dialogue between the Church and her divine Husband, the gorgeous "Song of Songs." In confirmation of this, Mr. Meshullam mentions that the heights and hollows in the whole of this neighbourhood still bear names that reveal their ancient cultivation and fertility—such as "peach-hill," "nut-vale," and "fig-vale."

In all likelihood, the gardens of that enterprising agriculturist of Urtas cover a portion of the old royal orchards; and one friend has noticed with delight to what an extent the living picture which Mr. Meshullam has reproduced in that scene—in its singing-birds, and sparkling streams, its apricots, and peaches, and figs, and vines—corresponds with the descriptions of Solomon in his Canticles. The labours of this singularly gifted Christian Jew in his farm at Urtas have placed beyond doubt two things—that the old abundance is yet sleeping in the soil of Palestine; and that it needs no miracle, but skilled industry with its enchanter's wand, and with God's blessing, to bring back the beauty and the teeming wealth of the earliest ages of the Hebrew monarchy. While the respect and confidence with which he has inspired the surrounding Bedouin tribes, causing them not only to leave his property unmolested, but to treat him as a friend and often to choose him as an umpire, has shown that even they are capable of being conciliated and tamed by good treatment, by persevering firmness, justice, and kindness. Ishmael and Isaac once wept and embraced each other over their father's grave: shall not their descendants one day embrace over Israel's resurrection?

XI.

Down at the Dead Sea.

Report of robberies—Increase of escort—Awkward squad—Going down to Jericho—The thorny crown—Scene of the great parable [Luke x. 30]—*Oriental brigands—Wildness of the scenery—Brook Cherith* (?) [1 Kings xvii. 6]—*Place of the temptation—Quarantana—Old Jericho—Fountain of Elisha* [2 Kings ii. 19-22]—*Historic memories* [Joshua vi.; 2 Kings ii. 2, 3, 15]—*Later Jericho* [Mark x. 46; Luke xix. 5]—*New Jericho—Marks of earlier fertility—The Jericho theatre—A modern village—Tropical climate—The Jordan—High mass—An incident that is a discord—Look of the river—A protest—Full stream* [Joshua iii. 14-17; Ps. cxiv. 5; Matt. iii. 13-17]—*The Dead Sea—First impressions—Flight of wild ducks—Reign of desolation—Problems—Lieutenant Lynch—Engedi—The Essenes—Off to Mar Saba—Birds in the wilderness—With the monks and the birds—History of the convent—Suggestions—Convent-bell at midnight—Biblical illustrations* [Gen. xxiv. 19, 20].

OUR last excursion from Jerusalem was by the Jericho road to the Jordan and the Dead Sea. As our intention was to make a considerable circuit, so as to return by the Convent of Mar Saba, this journey was certain to occupy the greater part of three days. On the evening before we set off, the tidings were reported to us in our little hotel, with much gravity, that a party had been attacked on the line of our route near to the Jordan, only two days before. We found, on inquiry, that while there was some truth in the report, there was a good deal of exaggeration in the details; and all that we did was to increase the number of our Bedouin escort; for while by this time we had got accustomed to false alarms, we well knew that the road over which we were about to travel was the most dangerous in Palestine—at least on the western side of the Jordan. Our guard, when it appeared the next

morning, was of a somewhat ragged description; most innocent of soap or of pipe-clay; each man carrying a long musket, whose barrel was strengthened by a number of brass rings fixed round it, reminding one of a broken limb that had been carefully bandaged; and the chief carrying the additional distinction of a sabre dangling at his side, and two enormous pistols stuck in his belt, with handles like the heads of little bull-dogs.

Winding rapidly round the southern point of Olivet, and turning eastward past Bethany, of which we obtained a parting glimpse, we began our descent towards Jericho. The evangelical writers are strictly true to the facts of geography,—as they are indeed in every other instance,—when they speak of "going down" from Jerusalem to Jericho; for you descend quickly all the way, the plain of the Jordan in which old Jericho stood being three thousand feet below the mountain-level of Jerusalem. On the earlier part of our journey, we were greatly interested by repeatedly coming on a shrub or bush having tangled branches with sharp spikes more than an inch long. It is traditionally named as the species of bush from which our Lord's thorny crown was woven; and it has been not inaccurately represented in some of the pictures of the Old Masters. Certainly, when such a cruel garland was fastened around the temples, and still more when the head was stricken, the wounds must have been deep, and the suffering great.

As we advanced, the signs of vegetation became scantier, and the road more wild, intricate, and difficult. We now became impressed with what has so often been noticed,—the exquisite propriety with which this path had been chosen by our Lord as the scene of his great parable of "the good Samaritan." "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead." There were twenty places on our way where we could imagine the scene to have been enacted, as it has often indeed

been repeated in its darker features since Christ's days. Jerome mentions one place as familiarly known in his times by the name of the red or bloody road. Again and again, we passed on a narrow path between high, black, frowning rocks, coming upon sharp angles, beyond which a band of robbers completely hidden might have been waiting with pointed muzzles to give us a bloody welcome, or to receive us into a snare from which there would be no escape. It would be difficult to imagine a mountain-pass even in Calabria more suitable for Italian brigands than this Jericho road is for the Oriental robber. At one sharp narrow turn, we came upon a company of Arabs, with their spears in rest and their matchlocks in their hands, who glared upon us with their fierce covetous eyes; but they did us no harm. We were not unwilling, however, by a more rapid pace, to put a mile or two between us and such thievish-looking characters, especially as they might happen to change their mind.

At length, we got out from those rocky zigzag paths, and moved cautiously along the sides of high mountains, from which we looked down into wadys of almost terrific depth. The heat was great; the soil chalky; everything baked and withered; channels that had not long since been the bed of mountain streams, had become so dry that we might have lain down and slept in them with safety. One of these wadys was so deep, and the part of the mountain below us so precipitous, that it was sometimes dizzying to look downwards, and one false step would have been certain destruction. We noticed, however, that while there was not so much moisture as a drop of dew on the sides of the mountain, there was a brook of considerable volume and breadth flowing at the bottom of the valley, thickly covered in many places with oleander-bushes, which grew on either side of it, but in other places open and clear, moving on with a steady current of some force. What rivulet was this? Its modern name is Krith; and the more we thought, the more

we were inclined to concur in the judgment of many travellers of authority, that this was the actual brook Cherith, on whose banks the prophet Elijah was sent to hide himself from the vengeance of Ahab during the first period of the three years of famine. Looking at the various natural conditions of the scene, it was impossible to imagine any place more wonderfully fitted to be the refuge of that fearless "prophet of fire." We remarked this to our friend who was riding near us. The place itself was almost inaccessible. The brook continued to flow on, as if secretly fed by some inexhaustible fountain, when everything around for many miles looked as if it had come out of an oven. Those thickly-tangled oleander-bushes would not only supply a most grateful shade, but many a dark covert in which Elijah might elude discovery. Only one condition seemed wanting to fill up the narrative in the Second Book of Kings. As we said this, a number of ravens rose from the very spot, and sailed up past us into the sky. "There," we exclaimed, "are the great-grandchildren by thousands of generations of the ravens that were Elijah's miraculous purveyors!" "For the ravens brought him bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening; and he drank of the brook."

When we had ridden for more than four hours, we came upon a region of extraordinary solitariness and desolation, the place among the mountains of Judea which an old and highly probable tradition has fixed upon as the scene of our Lord's first temptation. It is not merely what Milton has pictured it,—

"A barren desert, fountainless and dry,"—

but like a place to be shunned; a spot on which the very dews of heaven would refuse to fall—confused, blasted, judgment-stricken. Maundrell long since truly described it as "so torn and disordered as if the earth had here suffered some great convulsion, in which its very bowels had been turned outward."

Dim mists hung over it, like some unwholesome exhalation. Hither came that "glorious Eremite," led of the Spirit, that he might fast for forty days, and at the end of that season "be tempted of the devil." It was the chosen battle-ground of single combat between the author of our ruin and Him who had come to be the author of our redemption. "Alone he fasted, and alone he fought." Satan conquered the first Adam in a garden; he was now to be conquered by the second Adam in a desert; and by this, and the greater victory upon Calvary, the garden was to be recovered and re-entered—something immeasurably better than the paradise that had been lost was to be regained. Is it presumptuous to say that all external things in that momentous conflict were in favour of the tempter?—the exhausted body of our Redeemer, the long solitude which had cut him off from all human sympathy, the depressing influence of the scenery; even the presence of the wild beasts, one would think, must have added to the horrors of the scene. But there was no opening for Satan's darts in that sinless spirit. "The Prince of this world came, and had nothing in him."

It was a positive relief to turn away from this weird-like spot, and, soon after, to look down upon the broad plain of Jericho on which the sun was shining—to trace the verdant line of the Jordan now so near—to gaze on the molten mirror of the Dead Sea at a greater distance—and to mark the play of purple light upon the distant hills of Arabia and Southern Palestine. Passing down by a comparatively easy descent, we were soon out upon the plain, and gazing back towards the rugged mountain-land over which we had been travelling. There, straight before us, was the mountain of Quarantana, by which the range is terminated—white, rugged, and naked, rising sheer up from the plain to a height of fifteen hundred feet. It is far from unlikely that it is the "exceeding high mountain" which was the scene of our Lord's second temptation, according to Luke's order, from which the baffled adversary, next seeking

to awaken in his pure bosom the fires of unholy ambition, "showed him in a moment of time the kingdoms of the world and all the glory thereof,"—

> "By what strange parallax, or optic skill
> Of vision multiplied through air, or glass
> Of telescope, were fruitless to inquire."

There are cells and caves all up the sides of the mountain, in which some of the more devout Coptic and Abyssinian Christians continue to keep their Quarantain, or forty days of fasting, before going up to keep Easter at Jerusalem.

Bounding eastward over the plain, another mile brought us to the fountain of Elisha and the ruins of old Jericho. There seems no reason for doubting that this is the actual fountain which was miraculously healed of its unwholesome qualities and its brackishness, at the request of the people of Jericho, by the prophet Elisha. It is a noble well to this day, gurgling forth at once with broad, bright, vigorous stream. An old traveller of two centuries ago describes it as flowing into a large reservoir or basin, an immense palm-tree bending over the brimming lakelet, and himself and a party of forty taking their afternoon meal on the margin under the palm's grateful shade. There is nothing of this amenity now, for the energy of the Bedouins always goes forth in the direction of destruction; but its waters are refreshing—the sweetest, it is said, in Palestine—and so abundant that our wearied horses plunged at once into the middle of them above their knees.

And if this was the memorable Elisha-fountain, then around us, in those pillars of broken-down aqueducts—in those fragments of pottery and hewn stones cropping up through the soil—above all, in those immense pyramidal mounds of débris—we beheld the ruins of the ancient Jericho of Joshua's times, "huge city and high-towered." With some difficulty we climbed through the midst of the loose débris to the ridge of the mound, and sought to call up some of the historic pictures associated

with Old Jericho. A mile or two eastward, between us and the Jordan, must have been the temporary resting-place of the children of Israel after their miraculous passage of the sacred stream. Around the lofty walled city which had stood on this spot, the chosen men of Israel had made their daily circuit—the priests, bearing the mysterious ark, moving in front of them; and on the seventh day, at the shout of the people and the sound of the trumpets, the strong ramparts had fallen flat to the ground, and God had put into their hands the glorious first-fruits of Canaanitish conquest. Nor was it possible for us to forget, as we looked up along the valley that stretched northward to Bethel, that down that very way Elijah must have come with his loving minister Elisha on that eventful day when he was to be taken up; the young prophets from their college at Jericho following him at some distance, and, from a vantage-ground not far off, beholding his sudden heavenward ascent in the chariot of fire.

The Jericho of our Lord's times—where blind Bartimeus and his companion received their sight, and where Zaccheus, little of stature, climbed up into the low-branched sycamore to escape the pressure of the eager crowd, and to have a better view of the meek Prophet as he passed beneath—lay nearer to the mountain, and can still be traced by those tokens of man's labour and residence which so unequivocally mark the site of the perished cities of the East.

Our servants had, some time before, left us for Riha, or New Jericho, a mile and a half southward, in the neighbourhood of which they were to pitch our tents and have everything in readiness for us. We followed in the line of the sparkling streamlet which flowed from the fountain of Elisha, and gave life and beauty to a somewhat broad margin of trees on either side of it. The Ain Dûk—another fountain, from which a second rivulet poured itself—and a stream issuing from the Wady Kelt, also marked their course by similar strips of green;

and there were little cultivated spots and pleasant knots of trees visible at wide intervals: but, in its general aspect, this plain of Jericho was bare and desolate. And yet this same region, stretching from the shores of the Dead Sea away up to Bethel, and from the Jordan to the mountains of Judah, had once been the very garden of Palestine. The former culture of the sugar-cane is to this day revealed by the ruins of old sugar-mills that are seen in many places, especially in the line of streams and aqueducts. The vine and the fig-tree flourished here in their congenial soil; corn and indigo abounded. Here the oposalbum wept its tears of fragrant, healing balsam, which was sold in Rome for twice its weight in silver; and Jericho rejoiced through many centuries in its favourite name of "the City of Palms." The luxurious Cleopatra coveted this region, and received it at length from her enslaved lover, Mark Antony, as her splendid dowry. The last of the Herods came here to die, and tried in vain to forget his misery in its matchless beauty. And all this ancient glory and Eden-like abundance may yet come back again. Irrigation from those little dancing rivulets—and, above all, from the neighbouring Jordan, with its extraordinary water-power—along with skilled industry and the protection of a truly paternal government, would produce a speedy resurrection of all the earlier beauty and fruitfulness. When once man is changed in Palestine, its soil will be renewed: "Upon the land of my people will come up thorns and briers, *until* the Spirit be poured from on high."

The silvery stars were shining down beautifully upon our tents before we had dined, and we were resolving on an early rest for our wearied bodies, when we were startled by visitors from the neighbouring Moslem village of Riha, bearing rude lanterns and thick branches of trees, and looking most debased and villanous. They were about eighteen in number, and we were a little uneasy to learn in what this sudden apparition was to terminate. Arranging themselves in a line, and closely

wedged to each other at about twelve paces distant from us, they moved to and fro, stamping with their feet and clapping with their hands; to all which they kept time by wild monotonous sounds, which gradually increased in loudness. By degrees they came nearer; at length so near as to brandish the thick branches in our faces, and to yell in our ears with cries the very opposite of musical. All this we endured without the least sign of resistance or look of fear; for had we shown either of these, they would no doubt have proceeded to more unpleasant liberties. At length the cry of "bucksheesh" interpreted all these performances; and with the present of a few coins, we thought we had rid ourselves rather cheaply of the filthy savages. But they had scarcely gone when there appeared a similar company of women, who went through the same exhibition, only with shriller cries and more horrible grins. A second "bucksheesh" disposed of them also. But the two ungainly companies had robbed us, in our extreme weariness, of a precious hour of rest. We were not without apprehension that, after they had taken measure of our apparent strength, visits of a worse form would disturb us during the night; but through the watchfulness of our guards, or for some other reason, we were left unmolested.

We rose early the next morning, and getting up to the top of a mound, looked down upon the miserable village from which our swarthy entertainers had come the night before. Its houses were about twenty-four in number: they were built and roofed in with matted brushwood, stone, and clay, and looked much more like pig-sties than human habitations. A thick hedge of some dense prickly shrub formed their wall of defence. The inhabitants count as Bedouins of the agricultural class, but are, in fact, prowling robbers, to whom farming is only a second resort. Their religion is a compound of Mohammedanism and foul superstition: and it is affirmed that the vices of Sodom have clung for four thousand years to the people of this region,

just as the bitumen has never been separated from its soil. Nothing, in fact, had a look of innocence in that wretched place except the beautiful white doves which cooed upon its roofs and flew constantly in and out of its dwellings.

Not far from this village there were little plots of trees and corn-fields; and we had time to notice the astonishing advance of vegetation in this region as compared with that around Jerusalem. There the fig-tree had only begun to send forth its first tender shoots; here it was covered with foliage. There we had left the corn little more than in the blade on the slopes of Mount Zion; here, though it was only the first day in April, it was the time of harvest, and some of the corn was already reaped. In a ride of little more than five hours, or at a distance from Jerusalem of fifteen miles, we had suddenly passed into the climate of the tropics. This is the case in the southern extremity of the Jordan, and in the deep Ghor through which it rushes to the Dead Sea. We recollect hearing an eminent traveller mention that he found flowers growing in this part of Palestine similar to those which abound in some of the hottest districts of India, and that many of the birds were the same as those which he had met with in the African Sahara. It is a unique fact in the physical geography of the world, that, in a country of about an equal area with Wales, there exist all the principal climates of the earth. Down towards the embouchure of the Jordan, there are the temperature and the natural productions of the tropics; in Samaria the climate is not unlike that of the south of England or the centre of France; while north, upon the loftier sides of Lebanon, you meet with many of the plants and animals of the frigid zone, and come upon the region of eternal snow, realizing the poet's picture of "sainted Lebanon,"

> "Whose head in wintry grandeur towers,
> And whitens with eternal sleet;
> While summer, in a vale of flowers,
> Is sleeping rosy at his feet."

It is more than a devout fancy which recognizes divine wisdom

in selecting a country of such varied scenery and climate as the centre of a revelation which was designed to be universal; for it has thereby been secured that the pictures and poetical allusions with which the Scriptures abound, shall be intelligible by the universal world.

We had become impatient to reach the Jordan, which we knew was little more than three miles distant from us eastward; and our refreshed horses, seeming to share in our impatience, galloped quickly with us over the plain, which was crisp with sand, or covered with samphire and other minute plants. More than once we rose in our stirrups, hoping to catch the first glance of an object that was like a sacred poem to our soul; but the singularly deep depression of its channel, and the trees which thickly lined it on either side, effectually hid it from us until we were almost on its margin. But there it was at length —"the Jordan! the Jordan!"—rushing impetuously onward like a war-horse to the Sea of Death. But as we were finding our way from the higher level down through tangled shrubs and thick grass to the river's brink, we were startled by a spectacle which, of all things in the world, we had least expected to see. It was Monsignor Capel again. Beside a clump of trees a wooden altar was erected, with six tall wax-candles burning and guttering under a mid-day sun. A stout priest, constantly fanned by an attendant, was performing what seemed high mass; the clever ecclesiastic was kneeling at the distance of about a yard; and the Scottish marquis, bareheaded, was also kneeling a good way further back. A little Arab boy, moved apparently by pity, tore down a branch from a neighbouring tamarisk-tree, and began to fan away the mosquitoes from the exposed head of the young peer. We turned away with pity of another kind.

This part of the Jordan is the scene of the annual immersions of pilgrims from all parts of the world, and the traditional spot where John the Baptist performed his baptisms. A

considerable stretch of the river is visible from one point; and the wild laurel, the arbutus, the pistachio, the willow, the aspen, and the tamarisk, form a richly variegated fringe to its banks, and a most welcome protection from the sun's rays, which, without them, would be almost intolerable. We confess ourselves unable to join with those who have recorded their first impressions of this sacred stream in words of disappointment and strong depreciation. We afterwards came upon the river at points in its upper course; and there, flowing with moderate current and over a rocky bottom, it reminded us, even in its music, of one of our own Scottish streams. We have seen a painter seize upon something much less promising at home, and call it picturesque. But where we now stood, the river was a hundred feet broad, and ten feet deep almost from its brink; and, rushing and swirling on with irresistible speed, it gave us the impression of grandeur and might. The last epithet we should have thought of applying to it was that of "insignificant." One strong Arab, having stripped himself and bound an inflated goat-skin round his loins, flung himself into the current. In spite of all his efforts, it floated him down with the speed of a cork. As he was by no means an expert in steering his course, it was only through a bend in the river with some overhanging branches, that he was saved from being carried away. No doubt the Jordan was now in flood, for it was the harvest season in its neighbourhood, and true to its old custom as recorded in Old Testament story, it still "overflows its banks all the time of harvest;" and though there are no lions in Palestine now, it had driven by its swellings many a leopard and wild boar from their lair among its reeds and willows. The nearest trees still dipped their lowest branches in its current, and we could trace the recent water-mark some feet higher, so that we saw the river to advantage. But even with these concessions, we can only account for the remarkable "toning down" of some travellers, by supposing that they

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had visited the river at a much less favourable season of the year, or that they had come with extravagantly excited expectations.

But there were grand and holy memories connected with the Jordan which, as we stood and silently gazed, seemed to shed a wondrous glory over it. Not far from the place where we then were—for it was "over against Jericho"—its waters had been miraculously divided, as the feet of the white-robed priests bearing the ark touched its brink; and while the ark stood in its middle channel, the triumphant hosts of Israel, more than a million strong, had passed over on dry ground. "What ailed thee, O Jordan, that thou wast driven back?" Many a century afterwards, at the touch of Elijah's mantle, twice in one day it had separated its waters and made a path—first for the heaven-summoned prophet, and next for his meek minister and successor. In some quiet eddy hereabouts, John had baptized his thousands, having proclaimed to them, as they sat in eagerly listening crowds in that Jericho plain beyond, the coming of the King and his kingdom, and the necessity of repentance in order to his meet reception. And in the same place, it is probable, there had met the forerunner and the King, the representative of the old dispensation with the Author and Head of the new; and while John had poured on his head the baptismal stream, the act of consecration had been immediately ratified by the voice of the Father from the midst of "the excellent glory," and by the visible descent upon him of the Holy Spirit without measure. That one event will make the Jordan the chief of all rivers while the world stands.

Through how many ages have the poetry and the prayers of Christians made the passage of this river the favourite emblem of the believer's death! Was it unnatural then, that, as we turned away from its brink, our thoughts sought utterance in those words of the hymn,—

> "To Jordan's banks whene'er we come,
> And hear the swelling waters roar,

Jesus, convey us safely home
To friends not lost, but gone before."

We were soon mounted and on our way to the Dead Sea, which was more than an hour and a half distant. For a time we kept near the course of the Jordan, which, as we could observe through occasional openings in the bright green foliage that skirted its banks, flowed around many a wooded islet, and looked truly beautiful. At length we struck more in a south-westerly direction, and passed through a region that became ever more and more bare and desolate as we advanced. Blackened sand-hills, and vast mounds that might have been the tombs of the giant sinners of Sodom, were our dismal landmarks. One has said that we might imagine cities looking thus "in the subterranean kingdom of hell." At all events, there was a kind of pictorial keeping in the fact that such a pathway as this should have been our road to the Dead Sea.

Yet the first impression produced on us, when we sat down on its northern shore and looked along its surface, was not of that gloomy description which so many have experienced. There it spread, like a smooth mirror, reflecting the radiance of the bright sun above, which shone out from a cloudless sky that was beautifully blue. We have seen lakes in Switzerland, and even nearer home, whose first influence upon us was much more depressing. It is the facts and associations connected with it, that do so much to spread a black pall over our spirit as we keep gazing on it. In all that far-stretching inland sea—twice as long and broad as our own Loch Lomond—there is not a single living thing. The old fiction has indeed long since been disproved, that no bird can fly over it without being poisoned by its sulphurous evaporations; and we ourselves saw eighteen wild ducks accomplish the feat unharmed, and alight at the mouth of the Jordan. But it is a fact that birds are almost never to be seen floating on its waters, or feeding on its shores. You look in vain for the white-winged sea-gull or the

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twittering swallows that follow the caiques on the bright waters of the Bosphorus. No boat ever skims its surface; for why should the fisherman drop his net into a sea that is without life? It is a kind of liquid wilderness. Floral life is not entirely absent, for we plucked one of the most beautiful flowers we saw in Palestine, about the distance of a yard outside the water-mark of the Dead Sea. But vegetable life is exceedingly rare, and the mountains that hem in the lake like ramparts on either side, are barren, igneous, and black, only capable of sustaining a few sickly plants; while the reeds that grow at the mouth of the few streams that flow into it are encrusted with salt, and look as if they were made of coral. All along its shores, as far as the eye could reach, there was neither village, nor human habitation, nor human being; for the Arab keeps at a distance from its sickly shores, even more than he would from a ghost-haunted ruin or a spot that was accursed. Then the traveller is unable to rid himself of the thought that those sullen waters float over the graves of the guilty cities that were miraculously destroyed because of their moral abominations, and that the very region has the wrath of God against sin visibly ploughed into it and written on it. The contrast was indeed great between this and the Sea of Galilee, on whose shores it was afterwards our delight to linger—bright and joyous with life, and almost every association connected with which was rich in lessons of purity, or in memories of the miracles of Christ's love.

The various problems that have so long hung over this mysterious sea, seem now to be approaching solution. Where was the site of the four cities of the plain? And, keeping in view the information supplied by the sacred narrative, what was the manner of their destruction? All modern investigations converge to the conclusion that the cities stood on a portion of land beyond the well-known ford which is now the south-eastern extremity of the lake, and which is comparatively shallow. They were built on soil that was bituminous, and therefore

igneous; the stones themselves were of the same material, obtained from the neighbouring slime-pits; a fiery shower of sulphur mingled with lightning would be enough to set the whole circle of cities in flames, and these burning down to the water's edge, the waters would rush in and complete the desolation, and, as it were, do the work of burial after death. Is it a mere conjecture that broken pillars are still visible through the transparent waters when they are low, and that these are some parts of the unconsumed skeletons of the reprobate cities? We saw the Dead Sea in its least unfavourable aspect, and the extreme gravity of its waters makes it less liable to be tossed by storms than our common inland seas. But it can be angry even to tempest, as the heaps of battered and blackened drift-wood near us made evident. It was only a bound and sleeping demoniac after all. The experience of Lieutenant Lynch, when it was black with gloom and shaken by a hurricane, and from which his adventurous crew only escaped destruction as by a hair's-breadth, might have served as a subject for the pencil of Gustave Doré, or for a scene in the "Inferno" of Dante.

There was one spot far down on the western side of this melancholy sea, to which we felt ourselves almost irresistibly drawn. This was the garden of Engedi, memorable in the records of David's youthful heroism. Was that the beautiful oasis on which a stream of light was now falling, as if it were carrying down to it some of heaven's "selectest influences"? It is a lofty plateau many hundred feet above the neighbouring lake. A noble fountain gushes forth from it, and after spreading verdure and beauty all around it, descends in a succession of cascades to the salt sea so far beneath. For two centuries before the advent of our Redeemer, and for some ages after, it had been the quiet retreat of the Essenes, the purest and most benignant sect of Eastern ascetics and mystics that had ever withdrawn from the world. While chargeable with the common mistakes of all recluses,—that of making light of the divine

institution of the family, and with confounding isolation from their race with separation from evil,—these men were neither idle nor selfish. Clothed in white garments, the emblem of that inward sanctity which they sought, these amiable anchorites mingled meditation and worship with earnest work. They cultivated gardens, extracted healing simples from the herbs that grew around them, sought to acquire skill in surgery, promoted health in their community by strict attention to the maxims of temperance and cleanliness, and sent little colonies out from their society to practise the healing art, not only into the neighbouring regions, but as far westward as the banks of the Nile. Were not these some of the children of the dawn, who were waiting to welcome the fully risen Sun? One is curious to know whether they ever held intercourse with Christ, or with his great forerunner dwelling in the desert not far off, whose meat was locusts and wild honey! The gospel histories are silent on this question. But Church history informs us that, before the second century, this interesting people found all their vague longings satisfied in the communion of Christian believers.

We were to spend the evening of this long day at the Monastery of Mar Saba, which was some hours distant, and it was more than time to turn away from the sad, silent shore. The way was even more steep and dangerous than that of our morning ride, while the heat of the sickly region took all energy out of us. It seemed almost an undue hazarding of life to ride far up along the steep sides of a mountain with roads that scarcely supplied a foothold for the antelope, and from which you looked down into a gorge that was dark at noonday from its narrowness and depth. Ugly black lizards and slimy centipedes basked in the rays of that sun of fire. At length we got into the line of the Kidron, from which we knew that we were on the right course to the convent which was to be our welcome goal for the night. Looking down upon the rocky sides of the

almost dried-up brook, we could see many a cave and grotto which, in former days, had been the retreat of stern recluses, and in earlier centuries, the last refuge of the persecuted saints of God. As we kept picturing to our minds those old histories of a heroism of which heaven holds the records, we were refreshed, at a sudden turn of the road, by a sight of the lofty gray towers of Mar Saba, rising in those rocky wilds like a lighthouse in an angry sea.

While we were visiting the convent, our little encampment, with the British ensign floating from our middle tent, was being prepared for us.

Descending by many steps, we knocked at the ponderous outer gate, and were answered, not by an immediate opening, but by a cowled monk looking out upon us from a loophole in the wall a good way above our heads, and demanding our authorization, which we had happily brought with us from Jerusalem. Then the gate was slowly and cautiously opened, having locks and bars that would have been large and strong enough for the castle of Giant Despair. In fact, the whole establishment had quite as much the look of a fortress as of a sacred house; the reason being that its great wealth is a powerful temptation to the lawless Bedouins around; and the law is rigid against admitting either a Mohammedan or a woman within its gates. We were conducted down winding stairs and along narrow corridors, and then led forth to the ledge of a rock fenced by a strong balustrade, which looked out into the terrific gorge of the Kidron far beneath. Then we began to have some notion of the form of this extraordinary structure. Down and down many a fathom the convent stretched, built upon and among the rocky declivities; and when we looked up, the sight was the same—building and cliff intermingling, so that it was often impossible to determine which was the natural rock and which the work of man, all terminating in yon giddy eminence from which a monk was looking out into the far-off

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world. Here and there, were passages along the precipitous sides of the rock duly fenced outward, which led to little solitary cells that seemed much more fitted for penance than for prayer.

This monastery belongs to the Greek Church, and is the oldest in Palestine, having been founded late in the fifth century by St. Sabas of Cappadocia, a man greatly reputed for his miracles and his sanctity, and for doing good battle with the heresies of his times,—though sometimes, it is to be feared, with rather carnal weapons. It is rich in manuscripts, and richer in treasures which the covetous imaginations of the neighbouring mountain Arabs have wildly exaggerated; while it enjoys the unique honour of having the first portion of the holy fire sent to it, after it has been received from heaven by the Greek patriarch in the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem! If old traditions are to be credited, this Mar Saba, clinging to its rocks in the Judean desert, must have attracted to it, in some ages, sacred persons enough to have made the wilderness complain of over-population. At present, the inmates of the convent do not exceed fifty. The monks with whom we conversed were sickly in appearance, and had voices like those of eunuchs. They regarded the somewhat tawdry ornaments of their chapel, and the piled heaps of martyrs' skulls, with much of the puerile vanity with which children look on their tinsel toys. It was evident that they dozed and trifled away much of their time in whittling branches of trees into staves with fantastic heads, and polishing into beads asphalt stones from the Dead Sea, which they sold at exorbitant prices. We liked better their friendship with the birds, which they were able, by a familiar whistle, to bring up from the neighbouring gorge. One beautiful creature, as large as a thrush, with black plumage and yellow wings, perched on the fingers of one of the monks and fed there. But, altogether, this extraordinary place seemed to us to be a tremendous anachronism. Might not those fifty able-bodied

ecclesiastics have done something to effect a friendship with the Bedouins as well as with the birds, and to give them at least the elements of knowledge? It is said that there are 30,000 Ishmaelites, dwellers in tents, from Syria to the banks of the Nile, who are utterly ignorant, and truly "wild men."

Our last experience of Mar Saba, however, was a pleasant one. As we lay awake in our tent far beyond midnight, unable to sleep from the too great excitement of the previous day, the bell of the convent rung through the wilderness with such a sweet, solemn, heavenly sound as raised our thoughts upward, and brought to our recollection those lines of Herbert:—

> "Sweetest of sweets, I thank you; when displeasure
> Did through my body wound my mind,
> You took me thence, and in your house of pleasure
> A dainty lodging me assigned."

Our journey to Jerusalem next morning, along the Kidron Valley, had little about it of adventure. But we met with some things that added to our stores of Biblical illustration. At one point, we came upon a large village of nomade Bedouins, dwelling in their black tents. For the first time, we encountered a shepherd playing on his reeden pipe and followed by his flock. He was leading them to a fountain from which a maiden was, meanwhile, drawing water with a rope, and pouring it into a large stone trough. She was not quite so beautiful as Rebecca.

In the afternoon of the same day, we bade a last farewell to Jerusalem.

XII.

At Jacob's Well.

Preparing to leave Jerusalem—The cavalcade—Farewell—The city's resurrection—Enjoyment—Lodges in vineyards [Isa. i. 8]—*Watch-towers* [Luke xiv. 28]—*Bethel—Site of ancient Bethel—Abraham's migrations—Interview with Lot—Minute accuracy* [Gen. xiii. 10]—*Jacob's dream* [Gen. xxviii. 15]—*Jacob's pillar* [Gen. xxviii. 18–22]—*Jeroboam's rival temple—Prophecy of* Amos v. 5—*Site and scenery of Ai* [Josh. viii. 28]—*Ride to Shiloh—Means of identifying it—Solitariness—Sacredness—Hannah, Samuel, and Eli* [1 Sam. i.–iv.]—*Stolen wives* [Judges xxi. 21]—*On to Sychar—Unspent blessing of Jacob* [Gen. xlix. 22–26]—*Adventure—Jacob's Well—Defaced condition—Causes—Topographical notices* [Gen. xxxiii. 19]—*Questions—Mausoleum of Joseph* [Josh. xxiv. 32]—*Jesus at Jacob's well—Gerizim: "this mountain"* [John iv. 21]—*Plain of Muckhna* [John iv. 35]—*Beauty of the region—Fanaticism of the people—Unexpected welcome.*

AFTER our early morning ride from the Convent of Mar Saba, we spent some busy hours in preparing for our final departure from Jerusalem, which we were to leave in the afternoon. Our party had now been increased to eleven, and we had engaged a permanent dragoman to conduct us from Jerusalem to Beyrout, and to supply us with provisions, tents, horses, mules, and servants,—with everything, in fact, that was necessary for tent-life and for a pilgrimage of many weeks in the East. We found it expedient to have a regular contract with our dragoman, which should be subscribed by both of us, and sealed in presence of the British Consul with his own seal and ours; the arrangement being, that one half of the stipulated sum should be paid him at once, and the other half at the conclusion of the journey if it should be found that he had honestly kept by his engagement. Every week's experi-

ence showed us the wisdom of this course. Even when the Arab might be tempted to trifle with his spoken promises, he pays great respect to the same promise when he has sealed it with his own seal; and the whole arrangement being a wonderful help to a treacherous memory, prevented endless disputes, and gave us much greater security than we should otherwise have had for the good behaviour of our guide.

As we wended our way through the Moslem quarter of the city and passed northward through the Damascus-gate, we presented a rather formidable appearance, our fifteen servants enlarging our party to twenty-six. There were thirty-seven horses, mules, and donkeys bearing our eight tents, our cooking-apparatus, our luggage, and the greater part of our provisions for many weeks; so that Nijim, our chief dragoman, curvetting on his rather sprightly Arab steed in front of our cavalcade, and aware that he had made a good bargain for himself that would leave him a considerable margin of profit when he reached his home in Beyrout, showed an excusable amount of self-satisfaction.

Men have often remarked on the sadness that came over their spirit when they were looking on some interesting or sacred object for the last time. We remember how Kitto eloquently records this experience when taking his farewell look at Mount Ararat,—that old harbour of our wrecked humanity. We were thus saddened into silence when, turning round at a sharp angle on the road at some distance northward, we believed ourselves to be taking our last glance at Jerusalem. When we had first looked on it some weeks before, its marvellously chequered history had rapidly passed before our mind like the scenes in a panoramic picture, and now we stood trying to forecast its future. Were all the unaccomplished oracles in which the name of Jerusalem appeared, to be interpreted in a spiritual sense as referring to the Church of Christ? Would not this captive daughter of Zion yet arise, and shine,

and shake off her dust, and again put on her beautiful garments Would not the place where the gospel seeds were first sown, become the granary and treasure-house of their richest fruits? It seems certain that the Jews shall one day return to their own land and capital, and that this return is somehow to be associated with the taking away of their thick veil of unbelief and their conversion to Christ; and what will Palestine and Jerusalem become when risen Israel comes back to her own. Perhaps that old gray shrunken city may become the meeting-place of all the Churches from all lands, and the glory of the whole earth. We are certain of the spiritual resurrection of the Jew; we hope even for the material restoration of Jerusalem.

> "Oh that some angel might a trumpet sound,
> At which the Church, falling upon her face,
> Should cry so loud until the trump were drowned,
> And by that cry, of her dear Lord obtain
> That your sweet sap might come again!"

We were to rest that evening at Bethel, and as it was more than three hours distant from Jerusalem, all our time would be needed to reach it before sunset. But it was a pleasant journey. There was something exhilarating in the cooler air after the sultry atmosphere of the Jericho plains and the shores of the Dead Sea from which we had come. We were pleased, too, at the novelty and adventure of the wandering tent-life on which we were now entering in earnest. Then our dragoman was garrulous and communicative, and much inclined to give his scanty vocabulary of English words a good airing; and we in turn had many things to ask of him which it was useful to know as early as possible on our journey. While our way led frequently past gardens and orchards that contrasted pleasantly with the parched mountain-sides of the Judean desert, and the narrow sombre streets of the old city which we had left behind us.

It was on this road that our attention was first drawn to those lodges or booths in gardens and vineyards to which allu-

sion is made, more than once, in the prophetic Scriptures. They stand on elevated places, and are composed of rude poles interwoven with the leafy branches of trees,—a coarse mat sometimes serving the purpose of the foliage, which soon withers. During the fruit-seasons, a solitary person, usually old or decrepit, is placed in them, for the purpose of watching against the depredations of thieves or animals, and giving the alarm to stronger men. Nothing could have been more fitly chosen by a prophet as the emblem of instability, or of desolation and desertion, than one of those miserable sheds. It was, therefore, with a true poet's eye that Isaiah used it as the vivid picture of Judah when wasted, forsaken, and depopulated: "The daughter of Zion shall be left as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers." The watch-towers in the midst of the vineyards which we occasionally saw on the same journey, are of a much more elaborate and stable construction, being built of stone, and sometimes rising to the height of forty or fifty feet, so as to command from their summit, where the watch sits, the whole of the surrounding country. During the busy weeks of the vintage-season, the greater number of the workers dwell in the hollow interior of these watch-towers. But it is not every proprietor of a vineyard that can afford to erect such expensive structures. If he be a prudent man, he will "sit down first and count the cost." Our Lord was therefore, according to his custom, taking advantage of common observation to extract from it his higher lessons, when he employed the man "who had begun to build a tower and was not able to finish it," as the representative of foolish and short-sighted improvidence.

Just while the sun was setting, we rapidly pitched our tents on a grassy plot in a hollow valley on the margin of the site of ancient Bethel, with its surrounding pasture-grounds. We could yet see at some little distance Beitûn, the modern Bethel, a Moslem town built on a narrow shelving ground between two valleys, and with a few tall waving palms inter-

spersed among its white houses and domes, which help to make it picturesque. The name of Bethel had a mighty charm for us, and we were impatient to visit it; but the silvery stars were already marshalling fast in the sky above us, and we must be content to wait until the early morning, ere we walked over those scenes which had long ago borne the footprints not only of patriarchs and seers, but of more heavenly visitants. We shrink from obtruding our more private religious services upon the notice of our readers. It is enough to say that from this evening onwards, through all our journeyings, the voice of united prayer went up nightly from more than one of our tents to the "God of Bethel."

Soon after sunrise on the following morning, we had climbed up to the table-land where was the site of ancient Bethel. A more modern town must have been built on it since, for over a considerable extent of ground there are the distinct traces of Christian architecture, and even of medieval sculpture,—there is a half-ruined Greek church among others; but, mingling with these, there are the equally unmistakable fragments of older foundations and structures, revealing the ruins of one of the oldest and most sacred cities in the world.

As we wandered over many acres of this region, everything we saw was in perfect harmony with those various parts of Old Testament story of which Bethel and its neighbourhood were the scene. The pasture-ground was unusually rich—wild flowers mingling in abundance with the nutritious grass, and supplying food to numerous flocks of sheep and goats. Nothing could be more natural than that Abraham, in his various migrations, should more than once have tarried long in such a region, especially when he found that its water-supply was quite as abundant as its pasturage. In one place two vigorous fountains send forth their bright streams, to which women from the neighbouring town were coming forth on that very morning with pitchers on their heads, to draw water. Was it at all un-

likely that Sarah and her maidens had many a time plunged their pitchers into those very springs?—or that that large ruined cistern which was supplied from those fountains, and which bore the marks of very ancient Hebrew masonry, was the favourite place to which Abraham and his shepherds brought their sheep and oxen, and asses and camels, to drink? It must also have been somewhere hereabouts that, when the flocks and herds of Abraham and Lot had so much increased that even this luxuriant pasture-land was too narrow to sustain them both, Abraham proposed a friendly separation between them, and gave Lot his choice of all the surrounding region as far as the eye could reach. "Then," we are told, "Lot lifted up his eyes, and beheld all the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, before the Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, even as the garden of the Lord, like the land of Egypt, as thou comest unto Zoar." Now the plain of Jordan is not generally visible from this Bethel table-land: but there is one grassy mound of some height on which one can stand at this day, and, looking eastward, can clearly trace the verdant margin of some miles in breadth through which the Jordan flows, and by whose waters its fertile holms are irrigated; and its grassy exuberance is only equalled at this day by the glorious vegetation which, less than a month before, we had delighted to trace from the tops of the Pyramids, skirting as with a line of emerald the banks of the Nile. And may we not imagine the majestic patriarch standing with his less magnanimous nephew on this very mount, when Lot accepted his uncle's generous conditions, and made choice of that well-watered plain which afterwards cost him so dear?

Large stones are scattered in profusion over many parts of this pasture-land in the midst of which old Bethel once stood; and many a travelling Bedouin at this day makes a pillow of them, and sleeps soundly when his eyes have become weary of gazing up into the midnight sky. There was therefore no un-

likelihood in the wearied Jacob, when he was flying from the resentment of his brother Esau, making a bed of those herbs and flowers, and pillowing his head on one of those smooth boulders which lay all around him ready for his purpose. But what a dream was his! A ladder stretching from earth to heaven—the glory of Jehovah visible at its summit—bright angels ascending and descending on its golden steps—and a voice from the midst of the excellent glory, addressing the entranced dreamer in words of promise and comfort, that included in them every article and blessing of the old covenant. And, as good Fuller once said, "It matters not how hard our bed, if so heavenly our dreams." That was a dream of no earthly growth or fashion. It was, in fact, a bright page of divine revelation; for God, who has employed divers manners of communicating with men, according to their circumstances and mental state, chose dreams and visions as the earliest of them all. It assured Jacob of the minuteness and the constancy of providential care; it symbolized the mediation of Jesus Christ, which is God's way to us, and our way to God, by which access has been opened for our persons and prayers into the gracious presence of the Highest. How has this divinely-inspired dream, dreamed somewhere on that grassy sward, commanded the homage of all the arts, and mingled from the beginning with the painting and the poetry, the architecture and the sculpture, not to say the music and the eloquence, of Christendom!

Many a year afterwards, Jacob returned to this same memorable spot to fulfil the vow which he had made on the morning when the place had been to him as "the gate of heaven,"—rearing an altar to the Lord on the pillar which he had anointed, and on which his head had rested when he dreamed his great dream. That pillar in due time became a sanctuary, and the sanctuary became surrounded by a large city, where the tribes often held their stated assemblies when the Judges ruled. But

how did Bethel's gold at length become dim! When Jeroboam revolted and formed his northern kingdom, he erected in Bethel, at the southern extremity of his rebel territory, one of his golden calves, and placed a temple over it that should rival in magnitude and outward splendour that of Jerusalem. We never got an adequate impression of the bold impiety of this act until, looking southward while we were wandering over the site of Bethel, we unexpectedly saw Jerusalem, with its Mosque of Omar and a large portion of its northern and eastern wall, clearly outlined before us in the morning light. It then appeared that Jeroboam's rival temple had been placed defiantly within sight of Jehovah's own temple, and the city where he had chosen to record his name. A prophet of the Lord had stood in Jeroboam's presence, and at the hazard of his life had foretold the destruction of the rebel altar; an earthquake, as he spake, rending it in two, and giving terrific sanction to his words of doom. Three hundred years after, the pious young Josiah came, razed the altar to the ground, bruised its stones to powder, and polluted the place on which it stood, by burning on it the bones of those false priests who had ministered before it. Meanwhile the prophet Amos had pronounced the burden of the degenerate city—"Bethel shall come to nought;" and in those scattered ruins amid which the goats were peacefully browsing, and in those old vaulted foundations which had been the undisturbed haunt of owls and jackals for so many centuries, we read for the hundredth time in Palestine that "not one word which God hath spoken shall fall to the ground."

We knew that the site of Ai lay southward not far off, for the careful examination of Van de Velde had raised into high probability the conjecture that the Tell-el-hajar of the natives answered exactly to all the requirements of the Scripture narrative respecting Ai. It is worthy of notice that the very name, "the mount of the heap of stones," corresponds with what the sacred story says of it after its destruction: "And Joshua burnt

Ai, and made an heap of it for ever, a desolation unto this day." Was this descriptive name branded on its calcined ruins in Joshua's time, and has it lived through all the changes of thousands of years, during which it has been rebuilt and has perished again? It would have been interesting to trace, with our open Bible in our hand, the scene of the ambush of Joshua's men when they lay concealed from the unsuspecting Aites, and to mark the spot where the Hebrew leader stood with spear in hand, silently directing by well-understood signs the movements of both parts of his army, until the flaming city assured him of a second victory. But the morning was advancing; our dragoman was impatient; and the way was far to Sychar, which we must by all means reach before nightfall, and where we had determined to keep Sabbath on the following day. And Shiloh, not exceeded in sacred interest even by Bethel, was to be visited by us on our way northward, though it lay some distance out of our course.

It was a delightful ride of three hours and a half to the ruins of this old sanctuary, which for so many centuries had been holy ground. In many places the country was finely undulating and even hilly, but on the hilly slopes there were gardens of the olive, the fig, and the mulberry tree often reaching to the summit. These were walled and terraced with some industry and skill, and men in considerable numbers were clearing the ground of weeds and doing other services of a cheerful husbandry. We seemed to ourselves to have been brought nearer home by such homely sights; and yet more, when we beheld the wild thyme, the wild rose, and the honeysuckle which here and there carpeted our path, and appeared to look upon us lovingly, like old familiar faces. But there were many other flowers in that rich region which were quite new to us both in form and colour; some of them of rare beauty, which we dismounted to gather and take home with us to Scotland; though sometimes at the risk of losing our impatient Arab

steed, whose latent taste for botany had evidently never been developed.

After three hours, we diverged from the main path to visit the ruins of Shiloh. Travellers with the Bible as their guide-book, should have no difficulty in identifying the spot; for not only does the modern name of the place, Silo or Siloan, hang out a guiding light, but the topographical notices of it in the Book of Judges are so remarkably specific as to leave you in absolute certainty about its locality. We are told that Shiloh, the resting-place of the ark in the days of the Judges, was "on the north side of Bethel, on the east side of the highway that goeth up from Bethel to Shechem, and on the south of Lebonah." This fixes Shiloh as standing somewhere between Bethel and Lebonah on the common route to Shechem,—not, however, on the very highway, but somewhat to the right as you journey northward. Our experience exactly corresponded with this. After travelling for three hours in a northerly direction from Bethel, we turned aside on the right to the ruin called Silo, after visiting which we came back to the old road. Soon after this, we passed on the left El-Lebban, the Lebonah of Scripture, and proceeded straight on our way to Nablous — the Shechem of the Old Testament, the Sychar of the New, the Flavia Neapolis of Roman conquest.

Our by-path soon brought us into a glen or valley, at the extremity of which was an eminence of some height which we ascended amid tall grass and tangled shrubs,—finding on its summit what seemed a half-ruined and roofless mosque, which was covered and shaded by a Syrian oak with enormous branches whose leaves were beautiful and fresh with the earliest green of spring. As the oak rose higher than the mosque, we climbed the wall, and, under the welcome shadow of the old tree, took a survey of the whole surrounding region. It was mountainous on every side, but the hills had everywhere a parched and white look about them, the bare limestone rock protruding in many

places; though it was easy, through our glasses, to discover signs that in earlier days they had been terraced and cultivated to their highest points, and that the whole district must at one period have been covered with verdure and enriched with the choicest fruits. There was, indeed, an almost oppressive silence and solitude about the place, for we did not hear a human voice, nor were we able to trace a single village within our whole range of vision. How different it must have been in those ages which immediately followed the entrance of the chosen people into the promised land! At this place, the tribes of Israel assembled to receive from Joshua, in the presence of Eleazar the high priest and other heads of the nation, their allotments of the territory which had just been conquered from the Canaanites, as we find recorded in the Book of Joshua, that wonderful "doomsday book" of the Hebrew commonwealth. To this selected spot, also, the ark of God had been borne up from Gilgal on the plains of Jericho, immediately after the conquest, and placed within its curtained tabernacle; and here it had rested through four centuries, nearly up to the beginning of the Hebrew monarchy. This formed the grand distinction of Shiloh above all other places in the land, that it was so long the ecclesiastical metropolis of Israel, the earthly dwelling-place of Him whom even the heaven of heavens could not contain, the centre-point of Jewish worship, the annual gathering-place of the unbroken tribes, to which they came up to keep holy festival unto the Lord.

It seemed to us far from unlikely that this eminence on which we were then resting was the actual site of the tabernacle, and that the dwellings of the priests and the other sacred personages may have clustered along its sides down into the valleys beneath. Some travellers of distinction have declared themselves unable to discover any fitness in the selection of this spot and region as the seat of the tabernacle, and the centre of the ritual services of the Hebrews. There has been

a flippancy of remark on this subject that has offensively savoured of irreverence, and that has too much reminded us of the undevout astronomer who criticized the planetary system which he did not understand. Even when we are not able to discern the reasons of a divine arrangement, it would be utter presumption in us to affirm that it was not, after all, the best. But as we looked around us, we imagined that we could see more than one reason why this Shiloh was, for so long a period, the chosen spot where "God should place his name there." It has been remarked that it stood as near as possible to the centre of the kingdom, and was therefore the most convenient for access by all the tribes, even for those on the eastern side of Jordan. Then supposing the tabernacle to have crowned this eminence, it could easily be seen from every point in the surrounding country, even from afar. It is encircled by an amphitheatre of hills all loftier than itself; and when the myriads of worshippers came streaming towards it at the seasons of sacred festival, from every corner of the land, we may imagine them to have pitched their tents on those mountain-sides, so that their straining eyes could at any moment see the place where Jehovah communed with his people, and the mysterious glory shone above the mercy-seat. As the place, moreover, was evidently designed to be a school of the prophets, where holy men might pursue their studies in quietness, there was wisdom in the arrangement that this college of seers and sacred teachers should stand aloof from the common thoroughfare, and that its "calm retreat and silent shade" should afford a ready refuge for such as were longing for "a closer walk with God."

We could not forget, as we sat beneath the shadow of that venerable oak, that some of the most beautiful and touching Old Testament pictures must have had their scene near to where we were then resting. Hither Hannah, that "woman of a sorrowful spirit," had come to plead within God's own sanctuary, that he would take away her reproach; and hither, four

years afterwards, she had returned a grateful mother, leading her infant Samuel, "asked of the Lord," to acknowledge answered prayers, and to perform her vows in giving up her son to the life-long service of the tabernacle. Here the wondrous prophet-boy had found within those hallowed precincts a yet better home than hers, had been visited in his holy childhood by heavenly visions, and sent on awful messages that must even have made the lips of age to quiver. Within that curtained house he had daily

> "Poured towards the kindling skies
> His clear adoring melodies,"

and had grown up to be the greatest, the most incorruptible, and the last of Israel's Judges. And how distinctly the contemporary picture of aged Eli stood out before us, with countenance so majestic and yet so shadowed and sad,—clear in his moral sense, yet feeble and vacillating in his will,—reaping in the flagrant sins of his sons the bitter reward of his parental indulgence,—imperfect and yet real and true, shining much in his hours of affliction by his sublime submission, and shining most of all in the hour of death, when, sitting on a stool and leaning against one of the posts of the tabernacle, he waited eagerly for the tidings of the conflict between Israel and the Philistines,—sorrowed when he heard that the battle had gone against his people, sorrowed yet more when he learned that his ignoble sons had perished in the struggle, but when he was told that the ark of the Lord was taken, owned that this loss to his nation and dishonour to his God was the heaviest stroke of all, and fell down broken-hearted to the earth.

About a quarter of an hour southward from this old resting-place of the tabernacle, there is a fountain making everything green around it, which tradition points to as the scene of a memorable passage in Jewish history, which finds its rough resemblance in the early Roman annals. Processions and sacred dances largely intermingled themselves with the more

devout observances of the annual Jewish feasts. During one festival season, multitudes of Hebrew maidens were engaged in a festal dance on the green-sward around this well, when crowds of Benjamites, concealed in the neighbouring vineyards, suddenly rushed upon them, and bore two hundred of them away to be their wives. It was not an act of guilty passion, but, as it must have seemed to them, a terrible necessity; and they could plead, at least, in palliation of their deed of violence, that they were encouraged to it by the heads of Israel, and that it saved a whole tribe from ignominious extinction.

Passing through a narrow wady, in which we could still see the traces of a winter torrent, we were soon again on the high-way to Sychar. At every mile of our progress northward, the country improved in beauty and fruitfulness. Villages were frequent, cresting some knoll or eminence, or half hidden among groves of olives; corn-fields dotted the more level places; and little sparkling rills danced and made music across our path. We were now, in fact, in the country of Samaria, and in the old territory of the tribe of Ephraim, the most fertile region in all Palestine. It was not in vain that the aged Jacob, whose dying vision

> "Did attain
> To something like prophetic strain,"

had pronounced his blessing on the two sons of Joseph, and especially upon Ephraim the younger, giving him "the chief things of the mountains," corn, and vine, and olive, and fig-tree all flourishing in abundance amid those everlasting hills; for there, far-stretching on our right hand and left, was the unspent virtue of the patriarch's benediction. It somewhat marred our enjoyment of the rich country and the sunny afternoon, to find two men from a village that we passed suddenly attempting to seize our horse's bridle, with the evident intention of levying black-mail; but they missed their aim, and cantering off, we did not give them a second opportunity. A

range of hills of considerable height now began to rise before us, at some distance, like a wall; and apparently standing at their eastern extremity, there was a bright mountain that towered like a giant-sentinel above them all; while beyond, as if terminating a second range, we could see part of another mountain covered with thick shadows, and apparently quite as high. When we heard their names from our guide, we looked towards them with deepened interest, for these were mounts Gerizim and Ebal, clustering with old historic memories, and between which lay Sychar, our resting-place for some days to come. In an hour after, we were riding through the midst of tall flowers under the shadow of Gerizim, and conducted by our guide to a broad level spot covered with large stones, which looked down on a vast plain that stretched away eastward. What place was this? we asked of our guide with some impatience. It was Jacob's Well!

We confess to a temporary feeling of extreme disappointment. There was no spot in all Palestine which could so certainly be connected with the presence of the incarnate Son of God. We could say with undoubting assurance: On this very spot Jesus had sat and conversed. From this very point he had looked forth on the scenes on which we were now looking, which were no doubt unchanged in their grand natural features. But while we knew from the notices of many travellers that the well had been greatly injured, we were not prepared for such a complete defacement of the old picture as this. We had thought of curb-stones around the ancient fountain to which maidens might yet come down at times from Sychar with their earthen pitchers, and their ropes to draw with, "for the well was deep." Multitudes of huge stones lay littered and confused all around, some of them broken pillars of granite, which, far back in the days of Eusebius and the Empress Helena, may have supported the basilica that then covered and inclosed the fountain; and in the centre of all this desolation, there was a

hole without fence around it of any kind, and less than a yard in diameter;—and this was the mouth of Jacob's Well. We looked down, and apparently about fifteen feet from the mouth, it was clogged up with great stones which had evidently been hurled in by the united strength of many men, and had stopped each other's progress a long way from the bottom. This could not be the consequence of mere neglect; it must have been the work of violence maddened by Mohammedan fanaticism. Of course, no water was visible; we question whether at any season of the year water can now be reached. The deterioration of this well with recollections of three dispensations gathered round it, has been going on for many centuries; but, in the last fifty years, very rapidly. In Maundrell's time its depth was 165 feet, and it contained 12 feet of water. But the constant throwing in of stones by passing travellers to assure themselves by personal experiment that the well was deep, has steadily diminished its depth; so that when it was visited by Dr. Wilson, and measured by him with his accustomed accuracy, he found that it was only 75 feet deep, while at that season of the year there was scarcely any water at the bottom. And now it had become an absolute ruin. Thus were our dreams and pictures rudely dashed.

There cannot, however, be any reasonable doubt that this is the actual well of Jacob. The fact is certified by the most clear and uncontradicted tradition coming down in unbroken line from the earliest times. The place corresponds with the topographical notices in the Book of Genesis of the "parcel of a field before"—that is, to the east of—"a city of Shechem," in which Jacob pitched his tent when he first came from Padan-aram, and which he afterwards "bought at the hand of the children of Hamor for an hundred pieces of silver." A look at the country, teeming everywhere with inexhaustible fertility, shows the patriarch's skill in the choice of pasture-ground which was free to all; while, at the same time, this purchased lot,

with the well in its centre in which he could claim absolute property, was of first importance in carrying on his shepherd-life. We can read the traces of his right of property in the spot, and his special claim to pasturage in the surrounding regions, in his sending his sons with his flocks all the way from Hebron, in the remote south of Palestine, that they might crop the luxuriant herbage all around; and here it was that the youthful Joseph first came to visit his brethren, and "see how they did," on that memorable occasion when, further north at Dothan, he was sold to the Ishmaelitish merchants, and borne away to Egypt—one of those apparently insignificant events which changed the history of the world.

The question has many a time been asked, Why did Jacob dig this deep well at such great expense and difficulty, probably one hundred and eighty feet down through the solid rock, when there are so many natural fountains up the Sychar valley not far off? The question is one of those instances of interpreting Eastern customs by Western ideas which are produced by half knowledge, and from which have grown so much useless criticism, and even witless scepticism. The fungi of doubt grow in sour and dark places. While the pasture-lands in those early times were free commons, as they still are in so many large tracts of the East, the fountains being rare, and indispensable not only for drink to the cattle and the flocks, but also in many cases for purposes of irrigation, were guarded with the utmost jealousy and exclusiveness, and, as is evident from many a passage in Genesis, were the occasion of frequent and bitter feuds. The proximity and abundance of fountains in the region, gave no security to Jacob that he would be allowed the use of them. His first obtaining a little freehold in the neighbourhood of one of the richest grazing districts, and his then digging in it a well, were measures necessary, not only for his independence, but for his finding the ample herbage around him of any avail.

And as this is undeniably the real Jacob's Well, so down yonder in the hollow, several hundred feet to the north, and near to the foot of Mount Ebal, is the traditional tomb of Joseph. We know from the Book of Joshua, that in compliance with the oath which Joseph had taken of his brethren, his body was taken by them, at the time of the exodus, out of the rich Egyptian mausoleum in which it had lain embalmed for centuries, carried by them all through the wilderness in their wanderings of forty years, and buried somewhere in this very parcel of ground which Jacob bought of the sons of Hamor, and which he added, when dying, to the patrimony of his favourite son. And why should we not believe that that is the actual sepulchre? There are no signs that the ground about the tomb has ever been excavated; and probably the sarcophagus lies concealed thereabouts which contains the embalmed dust of that beloved son of Jacob's old age, over whose inimitable story the world has wept for four thousand years. It is a square area, inclosed by white walls which are covered with the names of pilgrims from every land; those in Hebrew characters being predominant. Some tall trees surround it, which give to the whole an air of seclusion and repose.

But all these older associations begin to fade out of sight, as the recollection rises up before us that this same well was the scene of that great conversation between Jesus and the woman of Samaria, when she came down by that shaded olive walk at noonday to draw water from it, and found the unknown stranger sitting wearied, probably on the curb-stone by which it was encircled. We are in no ways disturbed in identifying this as the actual well of the momentous interview, by being reminded that there were fountains much nearer Sychar, from which the woman could have obtained water in abundance; because there is ample proof, in the foundations of houses discovered much nearer the well than the modern town, that the ancient Sychar

must have extended a good way further down the gorge. Moreover, there might be a kind of superstition connected with the well in the woman's mind, by no means inconsistent with the fact of her immoral life; while a real or imagined superiority in the quality of the water, was probably sufficient then, as it is now, to make an Eastern walk a distance even of miles.

And everything in the inspired narrative fits in with an almost startling exactness to the natural picture all around. Let a person take his seat on that fragment of granite pillar which lies near the mouth of the well, and read the fourth chapter of John's Gospel, and he will be struck with the fact that all the great features of the scene are here very much as our Lord left them, and that imagination has little more to do than introduce again into the picture the living characters. At first, indeed, he shall probably be absorbed in admiration at the grace and wisdom of the matchless Teacher, as it reveals itself in his conversation with the solitary, ignorant, guilty woman. He will wonder, as he reads, at the divine skill with which he makes the woman more deeply conscious of her misery, stirs into activity her languid conscience, sends in upon her heart the fire-flashes of his omniscience, breaks down within her one barrier of ignorance and prejudice after another, and at length carries the lamp of his truth into the very centre of her moral being, yea, carries himself and a begun heaven with him. But let the reader come to that passage in which the woman tries to draw our Lord away from dealing with her conscience, to the old stale controversy about the place where "the Father ought to be worshipped," and in which our Lord answers her in that memorable sentence which was the death-knell of all local religions, and swept away all sacred places from the earth by making every place sacred: "Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in *this mountain*, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father [that is, exclusively]. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit

and in truth,"—and what a strange vividness is given to the words, when, looking up, he sees the eastern extremity of that Gerizim to which the Saviour must have pointed when he spoke, rising sheer up before him to the height of eight hundred feet, and when he knows that yon white wely or prophet's tomb, which seems almost to bend over the summit, stands on the site of the old rival temple of Samaritan worship!

But let our imaginary reader now be supposed to rise from his granite seat, and, closing his New Testament, to look eastward. He will see the magnificent plain of Muckhna stretching north and south many a mile, and extending in an easterly direction as far as the banks of the Jordan, where a range of mountains terminates the prospect. When we looked forth on this plain in an April afternoon, it was waving with corn passing into the ear, and within a month of harvest; little islands of olives dotting the expanse, and with their dark green forming a lively contrast to the brighter emerald of the corn-fields. But when our Lord was at the well, it was probably in January, when the seed had only been a few weeks in the ground and the tender blade had just begun to appear. We may conceive the remark to have been made by his disciples on their walk northward from Judea that morning, "There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest." And now let us imagine our reader to open John's inspired story again. The woman has gone away, a good while since, to Sychar; the disciples are grouped around their Master at the well, and he is earnestly conversing with them. As he proceeds, he looks along the Sychar road, and sees the woman returning with a company of persons whom she is bringing to see the great prophet whom in her heart she believes to be the Christ. Jesus beholds in these the beginning of a harvest of souls which he is about to reap, and again the scenery gives shape and colour to his words: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and

look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest." You had been saying in the morning as we walked along the skirts of the Muckhna plain, "It is four months yet till harvest.' But, see, in my spiritual kingdom there is scarcely an interval between the sowing and the reaping. It is but an hour since I sowed in that woman's dark heart the seed of my gospel; it has borne fruit already. Meanwhile she has made haste to sow it in other minds; and in those approaching multitudes, soon to be followed by many others, I see the whitening harvest of immortal souls about to be gathered into my kingdom, into my heaven.

We now ascend the valley of Sychar; and as we move round the base of Gerizim and pass more into the centre, we are struck with the mingled grandeur and beauty of the scene. It is indeed the most magnificent and lovely picture in all Central Palestine. It is fitly guarded at its entrance from the east by the nobly towering Ebal and Gerizim, which rise almost perpendicularly 800 feet from the plain, and are separated at their base from each other by little more than a distance of 1500 feet. Splendid cactus-trees stretch up the precipitous slopes of Ebal; olive-groves adorn the sides of Gerizim. At first we ride through corn-fields; then we enter among olive-forests, and enjoy their genial shade; while through opening glades we see the sparkle and hear the rush of many a rivulet. Down on a green plot where the trees are less abundant, we see boys playing at leap-frog. There is the race and bound as among ourselves; but the dress of the Eastern boy does not suit so well with the game, except when it has been carefully girded around his loins. Still there were many successful leaps; and as often as this was the case, there were the clapping of hands and the loud and jocund Ha, ha! of the onlookers, as we have so often witnessed at home. And now we enter the region of gardens, where, while the olive still predominates, there are the mulberry, the apricot, the pomegranate, and the vine, whose

branches hang in graceful festoons from tree to tree, while rivulets bound onward underneath, and send out a thousand little rills that carry life and verdure and beauty everywhere. We know that Sychar is quite at hand, but these gardens hide it completely from us, and we can only see here and there the top of a minaret, in those parts of the ancient city that nestle on the sides and in the clefts of Gerizim. Our servants had left us while we were lingering at Jacob's Well, that they might have our tents ready when we arrived at our resting-place on a green knoll a little to the westward of Sychar. But the Sycharites have heard of our arrival, and are already surrounding our encampment in great numbers. They look upon us with a scowling, greedy look, that does not make us feel at ease ; and some of our number begin to speak of getting ready their revolvers. They are an intensely fanatical and turbulent Moslem race ; and it is just thirty-five days since there was a wide-spread conspiracy among them to massacre the whole of the Christians and Jews. And it was only a midnight message from the Christian missionary to the governor at Jerusalem, that prevented the consummation of the tragedy. And there is the good missionary come to welcome us, who, by a wonderful providence, has both heard of our coming and been requested to show us all manner of kindness. We were reassured by the grasp of that brother's hand so readily stretched out to give us welcome ; and ere we left Sychar, we needed his friendship. Feeling great fatigue, and conscious how much, after all the frettings of the week, we needed to have our soul "wound up to a higher degree of heavenliness," we were glad indeed that "to-morrow was the rest of the Sabbath unto the Lord."

XIII.

Sychar.

Sabbath morning—Worship in the Arab church—The reading of the curses and blessings from Ebal and Gerizim [Josh. ix. 30–35]—*Rationalist objections disproved by experiment—The great congregation imagined—Engraving on pillars—What?—A storm—Unexpected refuge—Sufferings of those who remained in their tents—Pictorial effects of the humidity of the region—Biblical associations connected with Sychar*—[Gen. xxxiii. 19; xxxvii. 12; Josh. xxiv. 1; 1 Kings xii. 1–25; John iv.]—*A walk in it—Its streets and bazaars—Its manufactures—Olive-farmers—Caravans—Population—Jotham's parable* [Judges ix. 7–20]—*Modern parables in the East—The Samaritan synagogue—The Samaritan Pentateuch—Estimates of its value—The Samaritan creed—Visit to the Samaritan high priest—Early marriage—The Levitical law in full force—Ascent of Gerizim—Keeping of the Passover—View from the mountain—Morning salutations—Striking the tents—Confusion—Departure.*

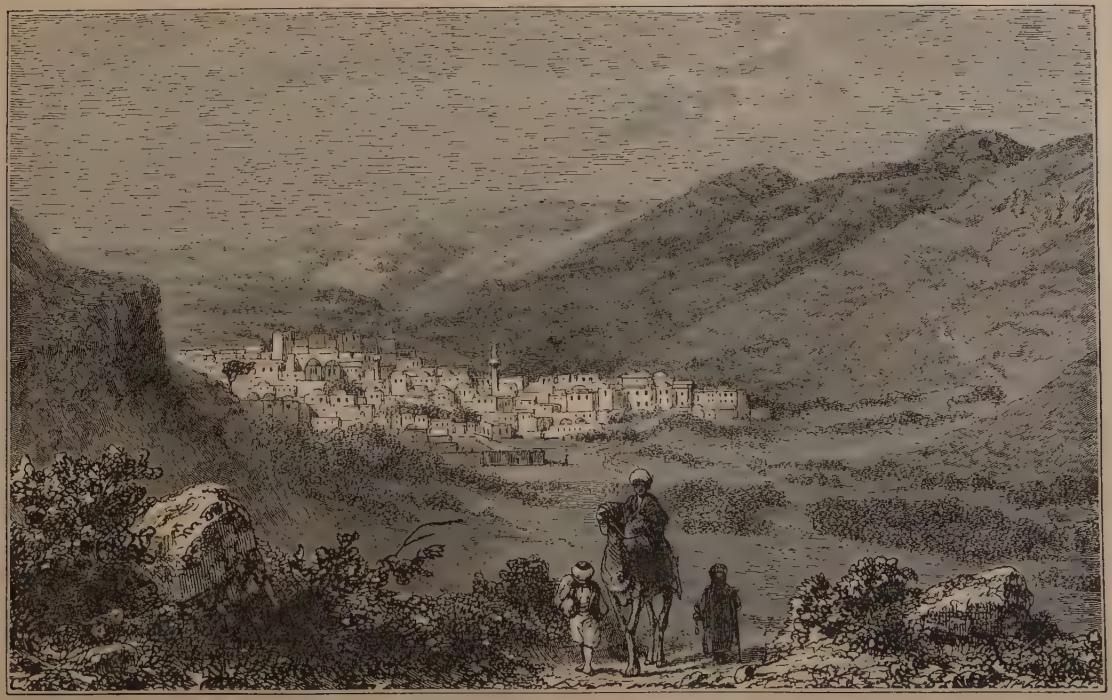
EARLY on the Sabbath morning, the missionary El Karey was at our tents, ready to conduct us down to Sychar; it having been arranged that we should hold a religious service in the little chapel belonging to the Jewish and Arab Christians, of which he was minister. It was a clean, airy, cheerful little place, with cushioned divans all round its walls, on which the native worshippers sat after their own Oriental fashion. Worship was conducted by an English clergyman who was one of our party; and this was followed by a sermon of much evangelical distinctness and fervour. It would be difficult to say how many denominations of Christians were represented in that little company of eleven; but both the circumstances and the character of the worship made us much more alive to our unity than to our differences. The consciousness of being surrounded by really hostile faiths, brings out in great force the sentiment of brotherhood.

We remained for some hours conversing with the missionary about his many difficulties and discouragements in this stronghold of Mohammedan fanaticism and nest of Jewish bigotry, with its veil apparently as thick as ever. By-and-by it was proposed that a portion of us should walk down to the entrance of the gorge, and spend an hour or two in reading and meditation at Jacob's Well. But the morning had been cloudy, and we were not far on our way when the descending rain and the increasing wind brought us to a halt. We were arrested on a spot of great historic interest; for, in all likelihood, we were in that very part of the valley where, according to the charge left behind him by Moses, Joshua, with the ark of the Lord before him, and having six of the tribes stationed on the slopes of Ebal, and six stretching up the sides of Gerizim, read aloud in the hearing of the immense congregation the words of the law with its curses and blessings, and the many myriad voices responded at each awful pause with their loud "Amen."

The two mountains approach nearer at this part of the valley than at any other, being little more than fifteen hundred feet apart at the base, though the distance rapidly increases as you ascend. It was very remarkable how much their shape and contour corresponded to each other, almost forcing upon one the conjecture that they had once been united, and that some tremendous convulsion of nature, the throes of "a young earthquake's birth," had riven them in sunder. Nothing that we had ever seen before in the natural world, so vividly reminded us of Coleridge's well-worn lines:—

> "They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
> Like rocks that had been rent asunder:
> A hollow sea now rolls between;
> Yet neither frost, nor rain, nor thunder,
> Shall wholly do away, I ween,
> The marks of that which once had been."

It is a stale objection, a good many centuries old, that the sides of the two mountains on which the tribes were stationed were much too far apart for the voice of Joshua and the Levites



SVCHAR, WITH MOUNTS EBAL AND GERIZIM.

to be audible by either half of the multitude; and modern Rationalists have not been slow to assert that Joshua's narrative of this sublime transaction is clearly chargeable with exaggeration and invention. But the rashness and invention are all on the side of the objectors. It might have been sufficient to satisfy a fairly candid mind, that the elastic atmosphere of an Eastern climate transmits sound with a celerity and distinctness that are sometimes astonishing. And, moreover, that the acoustic qualities of some places, arising from their natural formation, have been known to produce effects in hearing that, beforehand, were almost incredible. So that the wisdom of the witty Fuller did not desert him when he remarked that "the make and fashion of these mountains, picked out by God's providence for that purpose, might advantage much the articulate audibility of the Levites' voices."

But we were able to test the matter by experiment, as other travellers had done before us. Stationing two of our number in the centre of the valley and in the middle of a field of corn, one of our brethren ascended some distance up the sides of Ebal, while we clambered up among the rocks of Gerizim; it having been agreed that the one should repeat a few of the curses, and the other a few of the blessings, without mentioning which of them he would select. And though a drizzling rain was falling, and the wind blowing so hard that we could scarcely keep our Bibles open, we were not only heard distinctly by the brethren in the valley, but by each other from the respective mountains; so that, as we remember, we were able to name the first of the curses that our friend had spoken from Ebal, as if he had intended a sly reference to some of those Rationalists whose assertions we were now reducing to experiment — "Cursed be he that removeth his neighbour's landmark." How many other of the historical objections of unbelief would shrivel into ashes were they similarly put to the proof!

But what a congregation must that have been! Perhaps

half a million of people standing on either mountain, especially if we include "the women, the little ones, and the strangers;" each curse and blessing answered by a million voices, with their consenting "Amens" which rolled up the gorge like thunder, and awakened the echoes far and near. If we except some of the scenes connected with the giving of the law from Sinai, nothing ever witnessed on earth can have exceeded this in sublimity.

Another direction was left behind by Moses to Joshua: that, in addition to this solemn proclamation of the law with its associated curses and blessings, he should erect pillars somewhere on Mount Ebal, on which the words of the law should be inscribed; as if to teach us that the hearing of the law was to be followed by the permanent and practical recollection of it. What wasted ingenuity and conjecture some learned men have expended on this simple fact! They have imagined tall marble columns on which the law was chiselled out, and have expressed the hope that these indestructible pillars, graven deep and covered all over with their Hebrew characters, might one day yet be dug up from beneath the soil of the dark mountain, after the burial of so many thousand years—truth thus literally "springing out of the earth." While the sacred story distinctly tells us that the pillars were covered over with plaster or cement, on which it is natural to suppose the law was written while it was yet soft; and then drying and hardening, the writing would continue for ages, though not likely to survive the action of climate, or to escape the Vandalism of man for so many thousand years.

When this difficulty has been laid to rest, the same class of men have been ready with another. What an incredible labour and length of time, they say, it must have cost to write the whole of Deuteronomy on tablets of stone, or even on walls of cement! "Where," says an old writer, "shall they find, and how shall they fetch, stones in folio for so voluminous a work?"

While nothing more seems meant than the thirteen cursings with their opposite blessings were inscribed on the cement; and perhaps, along with these, the ten commandments, which the same quaint writer has happily termed "the breviate and abstract of the whole law." How often do we mine too deep, as well as dig too near the surface, for the golden nugget of truth!

On returning to our encampment up among the olives, hoping that we should at length command some solitude and Sabbath peace, we found ourselves introduced into discomfort and vexation. The drizzling rain of the forenoon had not abated, and the breeze had increased to a gale. The canvas of our tent turned out to be less waterproof than a common umbrella, and not only the grassy floor beneath us, but even our beds, began to be soaked with rain. Heavy drops were every moment falling upon us from above, and we were sitting with our feet in water. So thick had the gloom become, that the dark summits of the two mountains, though so very near us, could not be seen. What were we to do? To have remained in the tent overnight would have been perilous to health, and even to life. And yet there was no certainty of accommodation in Sychar. A dry and sheltered cave on the sides of Ebal, had it been offered us at that moment, would have been gladly hailed. At length, when it was within an hour of evening, the welcome countenance of the missionary once more appeared. We eagerly inquired, Was there no inn, or khan, or lodging-house, in which we could obtain refuge for the night? Nothing of the kind. Two persons might with difficulty be sheltered in the missionary's own house. This accommodation we at once yielded up to a physician and his wife, who were of our company; throwing out at the same time the timid question whether, in our straits, some of us might not be allowed to sleep overnight on the divans in the little chapel in which we had worshipped in the morning. Yes; those of us who chose, might. Along with the friend who occupied the

same tent with us, we gratefully accepted the asylum; the others remained behind, either expecting the storm to abate, or that, with better tents and more sheltered positions than our own, they would be able to brave it out. The watchmen were just proceeding to shut the gate of Sychar when we entered it. A broad and rapid stream was flowing down its principal street; by no means an unmixed evil, for it would be a most efficient scavenger, sweeping away before it the filth and offal of many weeks. Sheltered at length in that little house of prayer, we did not hear the faintest whisper of the storm; and in a short time we were locked in one of the most refreshing sleeps we enjoyed in Palestine. We returned to our encampment early on the following morning, to learn how much suffering we had escaped. Canvas had been torn to shreds, tent-poles had been broken, lights and fires had been extinguished. Some had sat for hours in thick darkness up to their ankles in water, and longing for the break of day. In some, the seeds of maladies were sown that night, from which they are suffering to this hour.

It was a lovely morning, and all nature seemed refreshed and cheerful, after the universal baptism of yesterday. We could see, far down beneath us, the glancing of the full bright streams, as they rushed through the gardens of walnut and mulberry, of orange and fig, and pomegranate. The mingled fragrance of those many trees came up upon us like a heavenly incense; and the songs of innumerable birds, in which that of the bulbul predominated, seemed to express in that early morning the earth's glad worship. We now became fully alive to the truth of what had been noticed regarding this Sychar region by Van de Velde and other travellers—that the extraordinary humidity which is the effect of so many rills and water-courses, produces more of those beautiful atmospheric tints in which painters so much delight, than we meet with in any other part of Palestine. This forms one of the great

charms of the scenery of our own mountain-land, as any one must have noticed for himself who has lived for a week in the neighbourhood of Ben Ledi or of Ben Macdhui, or amid the exquisite lake-scenery of Cumberland. The vapoury atmosphere when sunlit, softens and glorifies everything, and gives us ten different pictures out of one object. The want of this is one chief defect of hot and tropical regions, and it is this which we generally miss in the Holy Land. "Fiery tints," it is remarked, "are to be seen both in the morning and the evening, and glittering violet or purple coloured hues where the light falls next to the long deep shadows; but there is an absence of colouring, and of that charming dusky haze in which objects assume such softly-blended forms, and in which also the transition in colour from the foreground to the furthest distance loses the hardness of outline peculiar to the perfect transparency of an Eastern sky." But this charming valley reserves an exhaustless beauty for the painter's eye, and presents all the softly-blending hues of a picture in our Scottish Highlands or in Switzerland.

And now, as we look down upon Sychar, more than half concealed amid its blossoming gardens, how many Biblical memories cluster around it! No town in Palestine exceeds it in this respect, except Jerusalem. Its original name of Shechem, passing into Sychar in the New Testament, runs through the whole period of the four thousand years included in the inspired narratives. It was here that Abraham first pitched his tent before the oaks of Moreh. It became the favourite pasture-ground of Jacob, a "right of common" having been acquired by the purchase of that parcel of land for a sepulchre, in which the bones of Joseph, so many centuries afterwards, found their last resting-place. When the Israelites had crossed the Jordan, and begun that course of conquest in which Jehovah Himself was their invincible Leader, the neighbouring mountains of Ebal and Gerizim became a second Sinai, where

the law was solemnly republished to the assembled tribes. Here Abimelech, during the turbulent period of the Judges, after having slain his seventy brethren, set up an independent sovereignty; and from the neighbouring height, the young and nimble Jotham spoke to the fickle people the most picturesque of Old Testament parables—that of the trees choosing a king, which cast ridicule upon Abimelech's unfitness, and foretold the people's punishment through the vile object of their choice. This was the spot where the foolish Rehoboam was proclaimed and crowned King of Israel, after the death of Solomon; and where, soon after, when the kingdom was dismembered through his infatuated rashness, Jeroboam was made king of the ten revolted tribes, and chose this as his capital, though the honour was soon shared by Tirzah, and not long after absorbed by Samaria. Centuries intervened, and at length the greater part of the inhabitants of the northern kingdom were carried away by the Assyrians into hopeless captivity. Colonists sent from Assyria came and filled their places, and intermixing with the gleanings of the Israelitish population that had been allowed to linger in the land, formed a mongrel race with a mongrel religion, partly idolatrous and partly Jewish. When the people of the southern kingdom came back from their later and temporary exile, and proceeded to rebuild their temple at Jerusalem, these Samaritans offered to share with them in the work; but were rejected, both from suspicion of the purity of their designs, and also because they did not belong to the chosen nation. This led to the erection of a rival temple on the summit of the neighbouring Gerizim, and to the institution of a rival worship in imitation of that of the Jewish Temple, in which disaffected and runaway priests assisted. Hatreds and animosities between the two communities were the consequence of all this. These extended and became more embittered with the lapse of ages; so that when Christ appeared, the Jews refused to the Samaritan schismatics the most common

civilities, and there is evidence from the Gospel narratives that the Samaritans paid back the bitter grudge with interest. The inspired notices close with the memorable conversation of our Lord with the woman of Sychar at the neighbouring Jacob's Well, in which he spoke to her immortal truths which added largely to those which had been echoed so long ago by the million voices from Ebal and Gerizim, and sent her up the valley with her newly-kindled torch to enlighten many other hearts in Sychar: though many think that this same "city of Samaria" was the true scene of the later religious awakening described in the Acts of the Apostles of which the evangelist Philip was the ruling spirit. One thing is certain, that Sychar was extensively Christianized in the first ages of our religion; and only eighty years after Christ, it became the birth-place and chosen home of Justin Martyr, one of the best of the early Christian fathers. At the same time, the peculiar distinction that clings to Sychar is, that from the days of Nehemiah downwards it has been the centre and stronghold of the Samaritan worship; that the Samaritan race and sect, extinct in every other region and city of the world, continue to have their priesthood, their ritual, and their synagogue here; and that, in all likelihood, animal sacrifices have been offered with longer continuance and in more unbroken succession on the summit of its Mount Gerizim than on any other spot on the earth.

It was with no little interest that we proceeded to explore this ancient town; and especially to visit the Samaritan high priest in his own house, for we were curious to see something of the domestic life of so remarkable a people. Sychar consists of two long streets, which run in the line of the valley; and these are intersected by a considerable number of cross-streets. In many places the upper stories, supported on pillars, project so far on both sides as to form an arcade, which serves to protect the passengers from the sun's rays, and which is also

found useful in times of turbulence and war. There are bazaars for the sale of provisions and cloth, the former being open and the latter covered. Two things particularly struck us as we wandered through the odd-looking streets. One of these was, that while Sychar is so very ancient, it presents very few remains of antiquity. No doubt there are plenty of broken pillars built into modern houses, sarcophagi used as troughs for fountains, and traces here and there of old Saracenic ornaments. But we saw no entire structure that we could call ancient; at least, according to the Eastern standard of antiquity. Frequent revolutions and insurrections, we suspect, have made rough work of the older past. The other circumstance was that we could see no unoccupied spaces in Sychar, unless we except the rich gardens which abound within its gates, and whose lovely trees frequently overtop even its loftiest minarets. The reason is, that it is a busy, growing place, the chief manufacturing town in Palestine. From its locality, it flourishes almost in spite of itself. Its soap manufactures are old and extensive; its cotton-cloth weaving is not despicable; and, above all, its manufacture of olive-oil employs a large part of its population. This accounts for the multitude of olive-gardens which we had seen around so many of the villages as we had journeyed northward, and for so many others which we were yet to pass. The olive-berries when ripe are carefully shaken from the trees, brought to Sychar by the little farmers on nimble donkeys, and sold to the oil-merchants, who have usually a ready market for all that can be brought. Then this Sychar valley is the gateway by which goods from the ports of Jaffa and Beyrout pass to the transjordanic regions; and by which, again, travelling merchants from the East come with their peculiar products to the markets and sea-ports of the West. It was no unlikely thing that at that very moment, hidden among those trees hard by, there might be a caravan of Ishmaelitish merchants, with their camels and mules laden

with spices and gums, with ornaments of gold and silver from Damascus, or even with shawls and silks from the more distant Bagdad, passing on to the land of the Pyramids, who would have had no objection to buy another Joseph, and to sell him as a slave to the wife of some modern Potiphar in Egypt.

The estimates we received of the population of Sychar were exceedingly varied; but could an accurate census be taken, we should not be surprised to find that it exceeded 10,000. Of these, the Jews are probably not above 50; the Greek and other Christians, 100; and the Samaritans, 150: the rest are Mohammedans. These are a fierce and fanatical race, insolent and overbearing to every sect but their own; usually on the verge of insurrection, often in actual conflict with the weak and vacillating Turkish power that rules them, and only peaceful when they feel the strong grip of such an iron hand as that of Ibrahim Pasha.

As we looked up from the open streets and saw portions of the town creeping up into quiet and shady nooks of the mountain, we could mark the exceeding accuracy of the description by Josephus that "Gerizim hangeth over Shechem." It must have been from such an overhanging eminence as that before us, that Jotham delivered his memorable parable of the trees meeting together to elect a king, and at length choosing the useless and prickly bramble—emblem of the usurping Abimelech, who affected honours for which he was not qualified, and became a source of misery and ruin to those who had raised so vile a person to his pride of place. It is said that Jotham, when he uttered his parable to the eagerly listening multitudes in the city beneath, "lifted up his voice and cried." And did any one doubt the possibility of a person speaking with a loud and distinct voice, being heard from such an eminence by those beneath, the problem has been solved by the well-authenticated fact that from that very height, soldiers, on one occasion in later times, addressed the people in the city, and succeeded in

instigating them to insurrection. The place was very skilfully chosen by Jotham; for while his parable could be heard by the citizens, those who were irritated by it when its drift and meaning came at last to be seen, would need to make a long circuit before they could reach the spot where he was, and he would have abundance of time to flee and escape, as we know he did.

It deserves to be noticed that all the trees introduced by Jotham into his parable abound in this region at the present hour, as we found on climbing Mount Gerizim at a later part of the day: the olive, the fig, the vine, and the bramble also in troublesome abundance; so that another Jotham speaking in these days would not need to alter a single image in his picture. And the further fact is surely not without interest, that at the present day parables and apologues drawn from trees, are among the favourite methods of conveying moral lessons, or of insinuating unpleasant truths in the least offensive manner, over many parts of the East. We select two from a considerable number that are mentioned by Mr. Roberts. Does a man in low station wish to unite his son in marriage to the daughter of one who is of higher parentage, an Oriental gossip, reporting the fact, will say, "Have you heard that the pumpkin wants to be married to the plantain-tree?" Or has a man given his daughter in marriage to one who treats her unkindly, he will say, "I have planted the sugar-cane by the side of the margossa (bitter) tree."

We paid a short visit to the Samaritan synagogue. It is a plain oblong building, with three recesses, and is roofed by two domes supported on pillars. Our chief wish was to see the famous MS. of the Samaritan Pentateuch, which is more precious than the fabled apples of gold to its custodiers. A copy of a rather juvenile appearance was first shown to us, which did not correspond with the descriptions we had read of the original; but a seasonable use of the money argument pre-

vailed in drawing forth the genuine article, with its crimson scarf and its other beautiful and costly adornments. We were not allowed to lay our profane fingers on an object so venerable. But the portions we saw appeared dim, blotted, and weather-stained—the explanation probably being that it is that part which is usually shown to visitors, and which is exposed on one of the days of their great annual festivals. We were willing to believe that it was very old; but its claim to an antiquity of between three and four thousand years, and to have been written by Abishua the grandson of Aaron the high priest, has no one to credit it except the Samaritans. Every scholar knows how unduly this version was estimated and extolled by learned men for a long period, even above the Hebrew original of the books of Moses. But the arguments of Walton did much to reduce the estimate to its proper level; and the laborious investigations of Gesenius have placed the opinion beyond doubt, that, with few exceptions, it is much less pure than the Masoretic text. There are exceptions, however, of a chronological kind, which have an important bearing on some modern discussions. No one has given the history of the fierce and long-waged controversy on this subject with more candour and clearness than our learned fellow-traveller, Mr. Deutsch. Fuller has written about it with his characteristic quaintness and wit: "For three things, saith Solomon, the earth is disquieted, and the fourth it cannot bear, namely, a handmaid that is heir to her mistress. How much more intolerable then is it when a translation which is, or ought to be, the dutiful servant of the original, shall presume (her mistress being extant and in presence) to take the place and precedency of her, as here apographum doth of the autographum, when the Samaritan transcript is by some advanced above the canonical copy in the Hebrew!"

The chief points in the faith of the Samaritans, as stated by themselves, are easily enumerated. They believe that there is

one God, but deny the plurality of persons in the one Godhead, and they have even been accused by some of tampering with passages in the Pentateuch which appear to give pre-intimations of a Trinity. They accept the five books of Moses as their only canonical books. They hold every part of the Levitical law to be still in force, and profess to conform themselves in all things to its ceremonial requirements. They therefore practise circumcision, and keep the Sabbath on the seventh day of the week with most rigid literality. They observe the Passover, the Pentecost, the Feast of Tabernacles, and the Great Day of Atonement; on which day they offer a sacrifice of six lambs on that part of Mount Gerizim where they suppose the altar of their temple to have stood. They expect the advent of the Messiah; but they conceive of him as a mere man, a lawgiver and a prophet inferior to Moses —and somehow they have come to mingle with this the notion that he will appear when their numbers have been reduced to seventy. They also believe in the resurrection of the dead, and in a future state of rewards and punishments. They have been accused by some of certain idolatrous practices, such as the worship of Venus under the form of a dove; but this is a charge which has never been proved, and probably those who have made it have mistaken some mystic emblem for an idol.

We confess to our having been curious to obtain a glimpse into the domestic life of those Samaritans; and though their customs and traditions were against our admission into their household, we succeeded in receiving a welcome, after a good deal of diplomacy. Our physician with his wife found in his profession a charm that threw open all doors to him. Three generations were living under the same roof, and were even gathered into the same apartment, so that it was quite a sample of patriarchal life. The high priest himself, with his long snowy beard, had a venerable, melancholy look, not without intelligence. His son, the heir-apparent to the high priesthood, was tall, sharp-featured, and watchful. He wanted the native

dignity of his father; and his bare legs and unsandalled feet certainly did not contribute to his venerableness. The high priest's eldest grandson, a youth of twelve years of age, was the most beautiful lad we ever looked upon. What a noble expanse of brow! How those features had been chiselled with a more than Grecian gracefulness! How the ruddy glow of youth beamed and blushed through that bronzed skin! Such a youth we can imagine David to have been when he first came down from his Bethlehem mountains and stood before Saul. We do not wonder that Holman Hunt has transferred that boy's features to one of his grandest pictures of the East. Beside this lad of twelve, there stood a young Samaritaness of the same age, who had already been betrothed to him for years. Let not our reader be offended when we mention that the two young creatures were to be married in a few months, for twelve is the statutory age for marrying all over Palestine and Syria.

It was striking to find the old Levitical law in full force in this apartment. In one corner, the wife of the high priest's eldest son was separated by a regular fence of stones from all around her. She had become a mother three weeks before; and it required another week to exhaust the prescribed period of her separation. Her infant lay in a little cot outside the fence. It was lifted out and placed in our arms—a very tiny Samaritan. Its little nails were already reddened with henna; and its bright eyes were made to look brighter by artificial appliances, which had been begun almost from the day of its birth. While we were endeavouring through El Karey to keep up a conversation with the old high priest, our physician's wife was quietly occupied in a corner in transferring his features to her drawing-book. When her work was far advanced, one of the elder children, stealing behind her, at once recognized her grandfather's features. This struck an unexpected chord. The second commandment had been broken! "Woe, woe be unto thee!" she exclaimed; "for behold thine image." The

drawing-book was abruptly closed. We suspect that in some transactions into which those ecclesiastics sought to drag our learned friend from the British Museum, there was not the same fastidious scrupulosity about some other parts of the decalogue. Those men have often been accused of greed. But we should be tender in judging them. Three generations are dependent on fifty pounds a year, and on such occasional presents as may be given to them by travellers like ourselves. Theirs is the avarice of want, and not of morbid acquisitiveness. When the wolf is often at the door, we are in some danger of becoming ourselves wolfish.

In the afternoon we climbed to the top of Gerizim, eager to look on the site of the old Samaritan temple. We wound our way up a rich valley, gorgeous with a splendidly-varied foliage, and musical with the voice of bright streams and with the songs of innumerable birds. Patches of corn-fields succeeded as the road grew steeper; and in less than an hour we were on the broad plateau on the summit. The foundations of the old schismatic structure which was destroyed a century and a half before Christ, can still be so distinctly traced as to give us the ground-plan of the whole building. Indeed, there are parts of the walls which at this day are a good many feet above the surface. We were shown the place where the six lambs are slain on the great day of the Passover, and the oven of stone in which their carcasses are roasted whole: the calcined bones and ashes of last year's sacrifice lay in a little heap before us. To those travellers who have been so fortunate as to be present at the Samaritan Passover, the spectacle must have gratified a sentiment much deeper than that of mere curiosity. It must have given a clear and accurate impression of the sacrifices of the old Jewish ritual. The slaying of the lambs at sunset, the touching of the worshippers on the forehead with their warm blood, the roasting of the entire bodies, the subsequent feast, until everything was consumed; and all this in haste,

with their loins girt, and with staves in their hands—were a vivid re-enacting of the far and remote past. What a conspicuous object the Samaritan temple must have been when it shone from the lofty summit of this mountain! To the travellers coming north from Bethel, to the dwellers on the far-stretching plain of Muckhna, to watchers looking down from the hills of Ephraim, and from the more northerly mountains of Samaria, it must have been an object of mighty fascination. The view from this commanding summit was glorious. We could see across the Jordan to the mountain-walls of Gilead in the far east; we could look down into many a valley, and upon many a village embosomed in its gardens of olive; we could see shepherds tending their flocks as they may have done in Jacob's days; and now and then far-off Hermon would look through his veil of clouds and show us his sparkling diadem of snow. How soon will this Samaritan Church, on whose fading glories we were now treading, be a mere thing of history? It will not be absorbed into another and purer faith, but it will dry up and die out. With a wondrous tenacity of life, it clings to its ancient birth-place as its last refuge; but another century will probably see this ecclesiastical Dodo in its sepulchre.

By five o'clock on the following morning we were roused by one of our Arab servants. The poor lad had a very scanty stock of English vocables; and having put himself under the training of other servants who knew better, they sometimes played upon his simplicity by giving him wrong words. His regular morning salutation to us was, "Good afternoon, my dears," an achievement in our language of which he was evidently proud; and we did not disturb his self-complacency. It is necessary to obey the morning summons promptly, and to avoid all folding of the arms to rest; for those unceremonious fellows very soon begin to take down your tents; and if you do not rise at once, you will have to make your toilet in the open air. An exciting hour follows: the rapidly snatched breakfast;

the packing of portmanteaus and boxes; the loading of mules with monstrous unwieldy bags, tent poles, cooking utensils, and provisions; loud cries for lost things; the scolding of servants; the howls of stricken Arabs, and the mounting of restive steeds. But a little after six we were in motion northward. We had a long ride before us; for that night we were to sleep on the borders of the plain of Jezreel.

XIV.

The Elijah Country.

The city of Samaria [1 Kings xvi. 23, 24]—*Mr. Layard—Natural strength and beauty* [Isa. xxviii. 1]—*Jezebel the temptress—Crimson sins* [1 Kings xxi. 25, 26]—*Suspended judgments—Sinning more and more* [Amos iii. 9]—*Samaria under Herod—Ruins—No description so graphic as that of prophecy* [Micah i. 6]—*The exile—Tirzah—Dothan* [Gen. xxxvii. ; 2 Kings vi.]—*Engannim—Turkish cavalry—Gilboa—Little Hermon—Tabor—The plain of Esdraelon—Description—European merchants—Battle-ground of nations—Jezreel—Naboth's vineyard—Jehu—Jezebel given to the dogs—The bloody pool* [1 Kings xxi., xxii; 2 Kings ix.]—*Ride across the plain—The Galilean hills—Saul's last battle—Nain in the distance—Shunem—Courtesy of the villagers—Garden of the Shunemitish woman* [2 Kings iv. 12]—*First sight of Nazareth—Reflections—Population—Clumsy traditions—Solitary walks of Jesus—"Mary's fountain"—Mount of Precipitation* [Luke iv. 28–30]—*Mr. Varten's hospital—Excursion to Carmel—Storks—Gazelles—Involuntary bath in the Kishon—The telegraph—Biblical descriptions verified* [Isa. xxxv. 2; Amos ix. 3]—*Scene of Elijah's sacrifice—Slaughter of the Baal priests* [1 Kings xviii.]—*Mediterranean visible—Elijah running beside Ahab's chariot—Explanation—The muezzin-cry.*

WE were now passing into the Elijah country. So much was the thought present to our mind, that on this and some following days we often imagined that we saw the tall, majestic form of the prophet of fire coming suddenly forth from some wady, or valley, and confronting us like an embodied conscience. Scarcely a ruin we were to visit was without some stirring memory of himself, or of his only less great successor Elisha.

On leaving Sychar our way led through a region abounding in water, which produced its usual effects of foliage and fertility, of corn-fields and orchards. At one point, we came upon a mill-course, pouring its sparkling stream upon an ancient wheel; at another place, we passed by shepherds gathered round a way-

side fountain to give drink to their panting flocks. In less than three hours we were toiling up the beautiful eminence which had long ago been crowned by the city of Samaria, the chosen capital of the kingdom of the ten tribes.

The mountain rises somewhat steeply, about four hundred feet from its base. It is surrounded by a broad and fertile valley, which is circled by a "ring of mountains" that rise considerably higher than the central hill. The account of the origin of the old metropolis is given in the Old Testament Scriptures with characteristic distinctness and brevity: "In the thirty-first year of Asa king of Judah, began Omri to reign over Israel; and he bought the hill of Shemer, and built a city on the hill, which he called Samaria, after the name of Shemer, the owner of the hill." It is a notable fact that on one of the stones which Mr. Layard dug out of the ruins of Nineveh, Samaria is mentioned, under the name of its founder, as Beth Khumri, or the House of Omri—a reference far from unnatural on those Assyrian monuments, when it is remembered that it was the Assyrian Shalmaneser who finally succeeded in taking Samaria and in carrying away its people into captivity.

The natural strength and exceeding beauty of the place do credit to the wisdom of Omri in selecting such a spot for the permanent capital of the northern kingdom. It could only be approached by narrow passes, in which numbers were of less account than courage; and a city placed on the summit of a steep mountain and strongly walled would be almost impregnable by the ancient methods of assault. It is impossible not to be attracted by the singular beauty of its position. The many-coloured foliage of the intervening valley; the varied contour of the encircling mountains, gemmed in many a place by little white villages, or by a solitary prophet's tomb; the occasional openings in the mountain circle, giving you glimpses of the valley of Sharon, or even of the blue Mediterranean spreading out its placid bosom glorious with sunlight,—form a

picture rarely equalled in Palestine. And if we imagine a spectator to have stood on one of the neighbouring mountains, or to have looked up on Samaria from the valley beneath, the picture would so far have been changed, but the beauty undiminished. The prophet Isaiah, with his fine poet's eye for nature, reflects the popular impression of his own times when he speaks of Samaria as "the crown of pride, and the glorious beauty which is on the head of the fat valley."

This city appears to have reached the culminating point of its earlier magnificence under the reign of Ahab, though being, from the first, one of "the thrones of wickedness," it was a hollow and short-lived greatness; for, as Isaiah had also foretold, "its glorious beauty was as a fading flower, and as the hasty fruit before summer." At the instigation of Jezebel, his Zidonian princess, Ahab erected a temple to Baal, and richly endowed a numerous retinue of idol-priests; and this was followed by the rearing of an ivory palace for himself and his imperious queen. It is doubtful whether the baleful influence of this woman upon Ahab and the fortunes of his kingdom, has usually been measured at its full extent. That she was a woman of "unconquerable will and immortal hate" like Lady Macbeth, that she was voluptuous and vain of her charms like Cleopatra, and that in the use of her powers she turned her weak and wicked husband into the veriest slave of her ambition, is seen by every one. But we doubt whether it is generally seen that her malign dominion marked a fatal stage of transition on the part of Ahab's people from their impure worship of the true God to the worship of false gods, from superstition to idolatry, from rebellion to apostasy. It is only in this view that we read aright those words in which the inspired pen places a double brand over Ahab's name. "There was none like unto Ahab which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up. And he did very abominably in following idols, according to all things as did the Amorites."

Even after this, indeed, when there were gleams of penitence and partial reformation, there seemed a merciful reluctance to give the people over to the will of their enemies—"How shall I give thee up, Ephraim?"—as when, after the three years of siege by Benhadad, the Syrian king, they were reduced to the last terrible extremity of famine, and by a miraculous interposition, according to Elisha's almost incredible words, they passed from gaunt hunger to overflowing plenty in a day. We obtained a new impression of that most dramatic picture which the inspired writer has given us of the famine in Samaria, when we looked round on the contiguous mountains and imagined them covered by Benhadad's soldiers, who could look down from those heights into the city and see the famine-stricken people pining on the walls, or walking like skeletons on the streets. And we had but yesterday seen, outside the gates of Sychar, such lepers as might have gone out from the gates of Samaria, so long ago, into the forsaken camp, and, after satiating their hunger, have carried back the news of abundance and life, which, in a moment, turned despair into jubilee. But the reformations were partial, and the degeneracy persistent and deep. Next to its apostasy to false gods, it is evident, from many a scathing reference in the prophets, that Samaria's besetting crime was drunkenness; and this was associated with those other crimes of oppression, bloodshed, and robbery, which are the marks of a people that are ripening for the sickle of Divine judgment, and whose cup of iniquity is nearly full. There is scarcely a bolder passage in all the ancient prophets than that in the Book of Amos, in which the very heathen are summoned from the distant Philistine Ashdod, and even from Egypt, and are told to take their post of observation on the neighbouring mountains, and to bear witness to the daring wickedness practised by those who had once claimed to be the people of God. "Publish in the palaces at Ashdod, and in the palaces in the land of Egypt, and say, Assemble yourselves upon the mountains of Samaria,

and behold the great tumults in the midst thereof, and the oppressions in the midst thereof. For they know not to do right, saith the Lord, who store up violence and pillage in their palaces." The long-threatened retribution came at last. Samaria was besieged, her temples and palaces levelled with the dust, and her people, with ropes around their necks and bound together in gangs like slaves, borne away into a remote captivity from which they never returned.

Eight hundred years afterwards, Samaria was rebuilt, and recovered a temporary splendour under Herod, commonly called the Great. That cruel and crafty Idumean had an artist's eye, and was a man of magnificent schemes; and seeing what a noble site the place offered, built on it a palatial city rich in architecture, whose chief ornament was a temple in honour of his patron Augustus. In this favourite city he lived in wicked splendour, delighting in song, and festival, and riot, and in the dance of the wanton woman. But its meretricious glory almost vanished with himself. There is no Samaria now. Hanging on the eastern brow of the hill, every part of which was once covered with the city, there is a miserable Arab mud-village of about sixty houses, the only redeeming feature in which is a church built by the Crusaders over the reputed grave of John the Baptist. But nowhere else could we trace either house or inhabitant. We imagined that we could see down in the valley the marks of what might once have been Herod's royal garden, laid out in plots and with channels for irrigation. On one part of the hill itself we followed with interest a long line of columns, a few of which were still standing, some broken, many prostrate on the earth, and others half buried in the soil or hidden in the rank grass; and these are not improbably the remains of a magnificent colonnade which lined on either side the principal street of Herod's city, that led up to the temple of the Cæsar such as we saw a few weeks afterwards in one of the oldest streets of Damascus. But this was all that remained of what

had once been Samaria. Those words had been written by the prophet Micah not only before the days of Herod, but while Israel was still a kingdom and Samaria its capital: "Therefore will I make Samaria as an heap of the field, and as plantings of a vineyard: and I will pour down the stones thereof into the valley, and I will discover the foundations thereof." We confess to our having been startled when we read those ancient prophetic words, and saw with what minuteness they had photographed the living picture that lay before us. The features were complete in their correspondence in every part. The upper portion of the mountain is rudely terraced by stones which had evidently been taken from the walls and foundations of the ancient city, and the intervening spaces are occupied by narrow corn-fields, or strips of garden from which the vine is not absent. The earth has been carefully ploughed or dug up in every place; and those stones which have not been used for terraces are either gathered together in heaps, or tumbled down into the valley far beneath, where we could see them "in multitudes confusedly hurled," like boulders left after the sweep and fury of an inundation.

We had lingered so long among these historic ruins that it was past noon before we were again on horseback, and it now became evident that our route for the day must be greatly shortened. As we proceeded along the narrow valley which led northward from Samaria, we more than ever appreciated its admirably chosen position for resisting the approach of invading armies, and our imagination called up other companies that so many thousand years before must have crowded those very glens. The myriads of Israelitish captives that were carried away in the last deportation by Shalmaneser, when Samaria was made a ruin, must have been driven along these very defiles, weeping and lamenting, wrung by a sorrow worse than the bitterness of death. "Weep ye not for the dead, neither bemoan him: but weep sore for him that

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goeth away: for he shall return no more, nor see his native country."

To-day we were especially tantalized by passing near to places rich in scriptural associations, whose very names had a fascination in them, but which we were constrained to leave unvisited. About six miles to the eastward of our path was Tirzah, the rural residence of the earlier kings of Israel, proverbial for its beauty, and the emblem of the Church even in the days of Solomon,—"Thou art beautiful, O my love, as Tirzah." Beautiful even now as it rises from the midst of corn-fields and fragrant gardens, and looks down as from a queenly throne upon scenes of verdure that descend to the Jordan's wave. That large mound of ruins, again, to the westward, surrounded by a little circlet of hills, with a lively fountain near it pouring out its waters and making the grassy plot around it so beautifully green, is Dothan, one of the favourite pasture-grounds of Jacob's sons—the spot where Joseph was first cast by his brethren into the pit, and afterwards taken up and sold to the travelling merchants from Gilead. How every feature harmonizes to this day with the old immortal story! Old Jacob and his sons must have had a good eye for choice grazing-fields, as that lingering verdure around the old "Tell" sufficiently proves. There are many natural pits, too, and empty cisterns, around the spot, in which envious sons might still dispose of a brother against whom jealousy had made them more cruel than the grave; nor is it less noticeable that the caravan road from Gilead down to Egypt winds past those ruins still.

Many a century afterwards, Dothan became the residence of the prophet Elisha. In the quaint words of an old historian, he became "the pick-lock of the cabinet council" of the king of Syria, and being able to reveal his most hidden designs to the Israelitish king, made it easy for him to anticipate and baffle all his movements. An army was sent by night to surround Dothan and seize the person of the patriot-seer, so that

when the prophet's servant looked out in the morning, he saw, to his dismay, the whole city encompassed by Syrian chariots and horsemen. "Fear not," said the prophet to his terrified attendant, "for they that be with us are greater than they that be with them." Immediately, in answer to Elisha's prayer, his servant's eyes were opened to look into the spirit-world, and he beheld every eminence around Dothan covered with a fiery guard of angels, with chariots of fire and horses of fire, the Heaven-sent protectors of the solitary man of God. What a sacredness lingers over spots that have been trodden by such visitants! A little before sunset, our tents were pitched near to the entrance of the vast plain of Esdraelon, not far from Jenin, the Engannim of Joshua's times, a town even now of considerable size for modern Palestine, whose minarets and domes we could see rising above the forest of olives and other trees, that helped to justify its old name as the "fountain of gardens."

It was some hours after the lights were extinguished, and we had lain down on our little iron bed, before sleep came. The dogs in the neighbouring town barked and howled incessantly, and troops of jackals answered in hideous responses further off, some of their cries too vividly reminding us of those of little children in distress. When they became silent, our fancy grew active in the darkness, and we imagined that we heard some of those foul creatures sniffing beneath the canvas of our tent, and burrowing away to effect an entrance. But simple weariness at length brought rest, and we rose in the morning quite refreshed.

It was delightfully exhilarating in the early morning, when the air was yet fresh and cool, to canter along for miles on the comparatively smooth and level ground of the now rapidly expanding valley. We were surprised to meet a company of Turkish cavalry, some hundreds in number, travelling southward in military order. They were a sort of mounted police, with vaguely-defined powers, ready to inflict prompt punish-

ment upon offenders without troubling themselves with the formalities of legal proceedings, and especially intended to be a terror to Bedouin evil-doers. Gradually one mountain after another rose up before us. Nearest us was Gilboa, the scene of Saul's last conflict with the Philistine hosts, and of his own and Jonathan's tragic death, where "the shield of the mighty was vilely cast away, the shield of him that had been anointed with oil." The literature of antiquity boasts no elegy so magnanimous and tender as that of David over the fallen king and the nobly chivalrous Jonathan, whose "love to him had been wonderful, passing the love of women." Gilboa was brown and parched, as if the curse of David still rested on it. "Let there be no dew, neither let there be rain, upon you." Little Hermon, rising about three miles beyond, was green to its summit, as if it were a pasture-ground for flocks. Further to the north-east there came into view, at length, the beautifully cone-shaped Tabor, not the true scene of the Transfiguration—the haunt to this day of wolves and panthers, and thickly wooded to its summit; while in front of us, across the plain, there rose a range of Galilean hills, far up in the bosom of which, somewhere, we knew was Nazareth.

As we rode slowly onward we were able to take in, almost at a glance, the whole of the magnificent plain of Esdraelon. From the shores of the Mediterranean, where it is guarded on one side by the noble promontory of Carmel, and on the other by the less lofty headland of Akka, it extends over a space of more than twenty miles to the banks of the Jordan, being separated into minor valleys by the mountains we have named as it approaches towards the river. Its average width is between ten and twelve miles, the richly-wooded range of Carmel, and the less bold mountains of Samaria, bounding it on the south, while on the north it is hemmed in by the green hills of Galilee. It possesses an extraordinary natural fertility, and is so level that every inch of it is as capable of culture as

the plains of Lombardy. Men competent to judge have declared that, if this single plain were brought under the hand of skilled agriculture, it would yield grain enough to support the entire population within the limits of the Holy Land. But at present not more than one-sixth of it is under even the rudest form of cultivation, and the greater part of what looks so beautifully verdant when seen from a distance, is either the rank luxuriance of thistles and other weeds, or swampy ground, in which the stork delights; though "that ancient river, the river Kishon," winds through it, and affords the means of natural drainage all the way to the sea. We searched with our glass in all directions, and while here and there we could see a solitary mound of ruins rising in the midst of that sea of verdure, we could not discover a single village or human habitation, except towards the east, at the base of Tabor, or on the slopes of Little Hermon. We afterwards learned at Nazareth that a company of European merchants at Beyrout had purchased the entire plain from the Turkish Government for £18,000, with the intention of developing its immense resources in the employment of native industry. This is important even as a recognition of the right of private property in this miserably-governed country, and, if carried out with energy and prudence, it will be one of the best means of education for the people, and will turn this spacious territory once more into a "garden of the Lord." But the native hands will need to be guided by European heads, and the fields will need to be strongly fenced and vigorously protected against the bands of lawless Bedouin from across the Jordan, to whom plunder and pillage are as the air they breathe.

But while this noble plain appears to have been formed by a bounteous Heaven to be the granary of the kingdom, how often has it been the chosen battle-field of contending tribes and nations. Perhaps there is no other place on earth that has so often echoed the terrible shouts of war. From the days of

Barak and Deborah, three thousand years ago, when the war-chariots of Sisera swept the plain, down to those of Kleber and Napoleon, in the end of the last century, when the Turks were mown down in thousands by the artillery of France, in what was proudly termed "the battle of Tabor," how many armies have met on those peaceful fields in deadly struggle, and the foaming Kishon swept away their slain to the sea—Philistine archers, Syrian horsemen, Midianites with their deadly javelins, Bedouins with their quivering lances, Saracens with their crescent-ensigns, Crusaders with their red-cross banners. The accomplished Dr. Clarke scarcely exceeded the fact when he said that "warriors out of every nation which is under heaven have pitched their tents in the plain of Esdraelon, and have beheld the various banners of their nations wet with the dews of Tabor and Hermon." It is a circumstance not without interest, that this plain is spoken of in the Apocalypse of John as the scene of the last great decisive contest between the powers of good and evil; for the battle of Armageddon is just the battle of "Megiddo," which is the ancient name of the plain of Esdraelon. Is the name merely symbolical? or is this very plain destined to become the actual field of one of those battles which influence the history of the world, and which is to turn the balance on the side of freedom, humanity, the rights of conscience, and Christian truth?

But here we are at Jezreel, which stands on a spur of Gilboa that projects far into the plain. A lofty square tower and some twenty ruined houses are all that now remain of what was once the favourite regal residence of Ahab and his Phenician queen; for Eastern despots in those times, as in our own, took pride in building and multiplying palaces. Of what wild riot and Heaven-defying lasciviousness was this place—looking out upon one of the grandest pictures of beauty and plenty in the world—for a time the scene! What bloody plots were conceived here, in the active brain of the woman Jezebel, against the prophets

and the saints of God! It is one of those places which teem only with associations of violence and wickedness. Down on that level ground, stretching eastward, there may have been the pleasure-garden of Ahab; and adjoining it, Naboth's little patch of ground, a patrimony which had come down through six centuries from his fathers, and which the sturdy citizen refused to yield up at any price to the exacting despot, pettish as a spoiled child. On yonder spot, in Naboth's ground, Elijah may have confronted him when he had come down to gloat over his new possession, the price of innocent blood, and had made him quail beneath the prediction of that dread Nemesis in which the punishment would be made to bear the image of the sin, as face answereth to face in a glass. From such a watch-tower as this which overlooks the plain, the watchman may have descried, coming up by the way from the Jordan, amid the clouds of dust raised by his furious driving, Jehu, the avenger of God. And from a window in some tower like this, the painted Jezebel may have been flung, at Jehu's command, by her crouching eunuchs, and her mangled body dragged to the mound where the offal of the city was heaped together, to be torn and devoured by such mongrel dogs as we saw at that moment prowling among the ruins. There is even a large pool at no great distance from the watch-tower, where Ahab's blood-stained chariot may have been washed, and the dogs, according to Elijah's prophecy, no word of which fell to the ground, have drank Ahab's blood.

We now began in good earnest to cross the plain for those grassy Galilean hills, which we knew somewhere imprisoned Nazareth. It was a ride in which we found the advantage of trusting a good deal to the sagacity of our horses, for the ground was in many places swampy and deceiving, and they knew far better where to obtain solid footing than we did. When we had got across and were a considerable way up the mountain, we halted, and began to search with our glasses for Nain, for

we knew by our map that it must be somewhere not far off. Our eye rested on it at length, about three miles distant, hanging on the western side of the Little Hermon, not very far from its base. Our glass brought it very near, and with the little hamlet so distinctly before us, we could imagine the touching scene which has shed so imperishable an interest around the place: the funeral-procession coming forth from the gate of Nain—the bier, with its shrouded but uncoffined body, silently borne by a few men—weeping women behind doing their best to comfort the widowed mother of that only son—a smaller company, with Jesus at their head, meeting the congregation of mourners—the solemn, hopeful pause—the word spoken by Jesus, which instantly leaps forth into effect—the young man rising up from his bier, and given back to his grateful mother, who can scarcely believe for joy.

We searched also for Endor, but it lay too far round to the north of Little Hermon to be visible from our halting-place. We turned away, musing on Saul, whose midnight visit to that remote mountain village gave occasion to one of the most strangely dramatic scenes in Old Testament history. There are few men whose character is less worthy of imitation, and yet whose history is more instructive. Not incapable of virtuous impulses and generous affections, yet nursing the passion of jealousy until it poisoned and embittered his whole being; great in physical courage, but without moral strength; with a keen consciousness of moral debasement and divine abandonment, becoming moody, melancholy, vindictive, and yielding to ungovernable bursts of passion that carry him to the verge of madness; betaking himself to superstition when he has cast off the last influences of religion; and skulking away across the mountain on the eve of his last battle, to the cave of a sorceress, to obtain counsel, in his extremity, through the tricks of necromancy. Yet, even at his worst and lowest, having something of kingly dignity clinging to him, like the

crown upon his head and the bracelet on his arm, which were found the next day on his lifeless body on the battle-ground of Mount Gilboa.

We were consoled, however, for our not seeing Endor, by our soon after entering the beautifully-situated village of Shunem. As we passed along, the villagers looked down upon us with kindly curiosity from the top of their mud-walls, and we were soon seated in a rich garden of lemon and orange trees, and comfortably shaded from the noonday sun, at our mid-day meal. They were hospitable villagers, contrasting favourably with the scowling men of Sychar. In a few minutes, half the population of Shunem were gathered round us; but their behaviour was excellent. We looked up to the loaded branch of a lemon-tree immediately above our head, when a friendly Shunemite, guessing our wish, cut down the branch with one stroke of his sword and made it fall at our feet, supplying a lemon or two to each of our party. A revolver belonging to one of our number was handed round and explained to his fellow-villagers by one of the natives, who had evidently been in the Sultan's army and knew something of the use of fire-arms. And this had been the possession and the dwelling-place so long ago of that noble Shunemitish woman who had "dwelt among her own people." Was this the old garden of herself and her husband, attached to that old family mansion in which Elisha, as he passed from time to time along this mountain-path, as we were now doing, had a little chamber prepared for him,—with a bed and a table, a stool and a candlestick,—in which he might enjoy undisturbed opportunity for meditation and prayer? In that corn-field hard by, whose crop was now advancing to ripeness, the Shunemite's little son may have gone out among the reapers and received that sun-stroke by which he died. Through openings among the trees, we had Carmel full in view about ten miles across the plain, where Elisha had his hermitage, and it was easy to imagine the

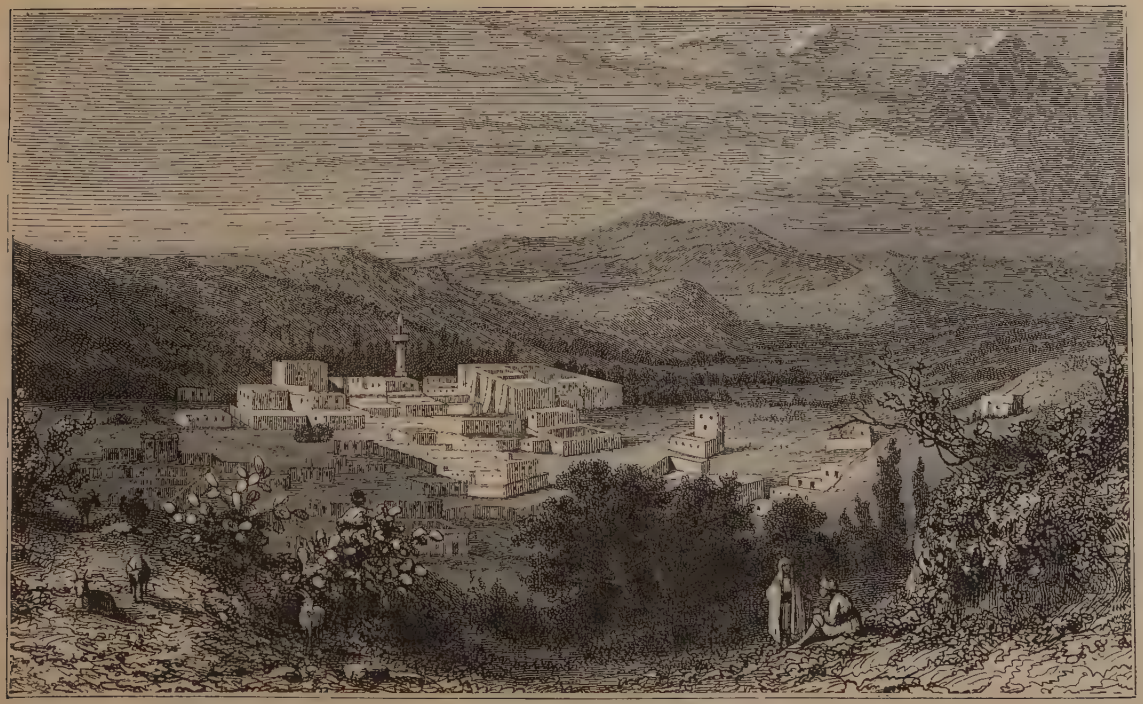
anguished mother seated on her mule crossing the plain to the prophet's mountain-home to seek relief from her terrible sorrow. We know with what sympathizing alacrity the man of God obeyed her summons. She who had so often received the prophet in the name of a prophet, obtained more than a prophet's reward. This village on the mountain-side had once been the scene of a resurrection.

Up and further up we climbed those grassy slopes, and rode with growing expectation over those rocky ridges, in search of Nazareth. At length, on our ascending the shoulder of a hill, we saw it at no great distance. There, at the head of a flowery glen, hanging on its western side, was the little mountain-town far removed from the busy world, wonderfully retired and silent. The first sight of Nazareth was a sacred moment in our life never to be forgotten. That was the home of our Lord's childhood, youth, and earlier manhood. What a power has gone out from that quiet hamlet, mightiest for good that the world has ever known or can know. "O mystery of mysteries! In that green basin in the hills of Galilee, amid simple circumstances, perhaps in the exercise of a simple calling, dwelt the everlasting Son of God; the varied features of that nature which he himself had made so fair, the permitted *media* of the impressions of outward things,—his oratory the solitary mountains, his purpose the salvation of our race, his will the will of God." We rode through the whole length of the town along its narrow tortuous streets, and pitched our tents a little way to the north of it, in a shady grove of olives, with a Christian cemetery on the one side, and "Mary's Well" pouring out three full streams of water, not far from us, on the other.

As there were some hours yet before sunset, we no sooner got rid of our horses than we were back again in Nazareth The population is estimated at 4000. Of these, only a few hundreds are Mohammedans: the rest are principally Christians of the Latin and Greek Churches, with about 400 Maronites

and 100 Protestants. There are no Jews. The usual good influence even of corrupt forms of Christianity is seen in the superior character of the houses—which are all built of stone—in the bustle and variety of the bazaars and shops, in the dress of the women, and in the general look of independence and industry among the people. There is, of course, a large convent belonging to each of the two great Eastern communions, with a Maronite chapel, and a small unpretentious mosque. We were shown the place where the synagogue had stood in which our Lord preached on that memorable occasion recorded in Luke's Gospel, the workshop in which he laboured as a carpenter with his reputed father, the table at which he was accustomed to eat with his twelve disciples, and other spots that have associated with them equally clumsy and unlikely traditions. But we soon became weary of this, and preferred to look on the unchanged face of nature on which He had looked, and to wander among the flowers which had been pressed by his blessed feet. There was the wild thyme, and the stately holyhock, and many a rock plant and meadow flower unknown in the flora of the Western world.

Is there irreverence in conjecturing what may have been the solitary walks of Jesus around Nazareth, and what may have been the posts of observation from which he looked forth upon remoter scenes? We think not; though it is very possible to carry this kind of speculation to an irreverent extent. There is one eminence behind Nazareth to which Dr. Robinson first called attention, which rises far above all the neighbouring hills, and commands one of the most extensive views in Palestine. Is it reasonable to doubt that Jesus must often have stood and gazed from that rocky summit? To the west the blue line of the Mediterranean is distinctly visible. Turning the eye slowly eastward, the plain of Esdraelon seems to spread its green carpet at our feet; behind it are the wooded ridges of Carmel, the rocky mountains of Ephraim, and the far-off blue Judean hills



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Further east, Gilboa lifts his dusky brow; and far beyond the Jordan stream, where the rays of the western sun are falling, are the hills of Gilead and the grand Hauran mountains. In the midst of yon circle of grassy hills sleeps the Sea of Galilee; that town which sparkles like a crown far up upon the brow of a hill is Safed; and, behind all, the snowy Hermon looks down from his throne of clouds, as if he were the giant guardian of "thy beautiful land, O Emmanuel."

But there are two places in Nazareth itself which we may, surely, with a fair measure of certainty, connect with the presence of Jesus. That fountain near to our tent which is pouring out its three abundant streams into a spacious tank beneath, is the one great public well of Nazareth. Early on the following morning we saw multitudes of women coming to it, with their pitchers carried gracefully on their heads or shoulders, to draw water. There were mothers among them who brought their beautiful little children along with them, to play on the green-sward in front of the well, while they rested their full vessels on its margin and talked with one another. Nothing could be more decorous than the conduct of those picturesque groups of maidens and mothers. Must not Mary, the wife of the lowly carpenter, have often come hither to draw water from Nazareth's only fountain; and must she not have often come to it leading by the hand her wondrous child?

The other spot is a rocky precipice, between fifty and sixty feet perpendicular, immediately behind the Maronite church, which is, in all likelihood, the real "Mount of Precipitation," over whose brow the infuriated citizens endeavoured to force Jesus, after he had spoken his faithful sermon in the synagogue. Did he effect his deliverance by a miracle? or was it one of those instances in which his look disarmed his enemies, and he passed away through the midst of them unharmed? In front of this Maronite church, and looking up on the "Mount of Precipitation," there is one of the most interesting places in

Nazareth. It is the little dispensary and hospital of Mr. Varten, a medical missionary, who was sent out and is mainly supported by the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society. This admirable labourer dispenses medicines and gives medical advice and surgical treatment during certain hours each day; while more severe and difficult cases are treated in the hospital. It is a neat, fastidiously clean, and well-aired house, with admirable contrivances for protecting the patients from noise, and from the glaring rays of the sun. One could easily read contentment and gratitude on the countenances of the patients, who had learned to value humane and intelligent treatment. Mr. Varten visits on horseback the villages around Nazareth, within a radius of fifteen or twenty miles; and besides the directly beneficent effects of his healing art, he has done much to strengthen the hands of Mr. Zeller and those other Christian missionaries who have Nazareth as their centre, and to associate Protestant Christianity in the minds of the people with superior skill and benevolent power. That little hospital, with millions of other institutions for the temporal good of men that are scattered over the earth, would never have existed but for Him who was called "a Nazarene," and who condescended eighteen hundred years ago to make this Nazareth his home.

Early on the following morning we set off, with Mr. Varten as our companion, on an excursion to Mount Carmel. It was necessary that we should once more cross the plain of Esdraelon, which was the work of more than three hours, and not without its adventures. We needed even more than the careful pilotage of yesterday, lest we should sink with our horses into oozy bogs, from which it might have taken hours to extricate us. Now we came upon storks feeding in fenny places; and at other times we startled large flocks of beautiful gazelles, which fled before us with a nimble and bounding speed that defied all pursuit. We found it no easy matter to cross the Kishon, which flows along near the northern base of Carmel to

the sea. There was a considerable quantity of water in its channel; and its banks were so precipitous on either side, that the problem seemed equally difficult as to how we were to get down into its water, or how to get out of it again. But we floundered through somehow, only one of our party being cast into the muddy stream, from which he emerged not improved either in appearance or in temper. As we approached the mountain, it struck us as a strange anachronism to see two telegraphic wires stretching along its side, and placing Beyrout, as we afterwards learned, in communication with Jerusalem. Beginning in a noble promontory that rises 1500 feet from the Mediterranean—into which it may almost be said to project itself—Carmel stretches into the centre of the land in a south-easterly direction, until it links itself on to the less lofty hills of Samaria. Our aim was to come upon it at that point which leads up to the scene of the great contest between the prophet Elijah and the priests of Baal. We had ample opportunity, as we toiled up the mountain, to verify the Biblical descriptions of it as the emblem of fertility and beauty,—"The excellency of Carmel and Sharon shall be given unto thee." At the point where we ascended, it was thickly wooded to its summit,—so much so that our servants, who were following us at no great distance with provisions, lost their way, and were so effectually hidden from us by the trees that we could only let them know where to find us by firing a succession of muskets. And the variety, alike in the flowers and the trees, was wonderful. It was a perfect paradise for botanists. One enthusiastic German naturalist has said that "a botanist might spend a year on Carmel, and every day be adding a new specimen to his collections." We were able, before we left the mountain, to add our testimony to the multitude of natural caverns with which it abounds, and to which it is supposed the prophet Amos alludes when, speaking of the vain attempts of the wicked to escape the knowledge or the punishment of God, he says: "Though they

hide themselves in the top of Carmel, Jehovah will search and take them out thence."

To our mind, Lieutenant Van de Velde has entirely succeeded in identifying "the burnt place" as the scene of Elijah's sublime sacrifice in which the question was reduced to experiment, "Who is the God?" The scene presents every condition which is required by the minutely graphic narrative in the eighteenth chapter of the First Book of Kings. First, there is a vast natural amphitheatre, which we may imagine to have been covered with myriads of eager spectators summoned to the spot by the authority of Ahab. Then a platform rises a few feet high towards the centre, on which we may suppose Elijah to have reared his altar, and around which he drew the trenches which were afterwards to be filled with water. About two hundred and fifty feet lower down, there is a large and deep fountain arched over by an overhanging rock, and further screened from the sun's rays by the thick foliage of an ancient oak. From this the water could easily be brought in barrels of convenient size, and poured into the trenches and upon the altar and the dripping sacrifice. The climax of the scene arrives when, after the frantic Baal priests have for hours invoked their god in vain, the calm and solitary Elijah, stepping forward and confronting them, prays for the divine signal of acceptance, and the moment afterwards, the awe-stricken thousands, with expectation strained to the utmost, behold the flame descending from the blue heaven and consuming at once the sacrifice and the altar. The Kishon flows at the foot of the mountain, and there, on a green mound, whose margin is washed by the stream, and whose traditional name is "the hill of the priests," those ministers of idolatry who had misled the people, are slaughtered,—their blood in a few hours to crimson the Kishon, when, after the coming rain, it rolls again in full current to the sea. After this awful tragedy on the river's brink, Elijah ascends again to the scene of his great triumph,

and Ahab with him, probably to join in the accustomed feast after the sacrifice. And now the prophet who had brought down fire from heaven by his prayer, pleads for rain to revive the long weary and parched land; and his servant is sent up to a loftier eminence from which the Mediterranean—the quarter from which the rains of Palestine come—can be seen, with directions to report the earliest sign of the coming blessing. We found, on ascending to a higher point that rose a little to the west of the place of sacrifice, that the Mediterranean came into view in five minutes, so that it would not be long until the seventh report told of "the little cloud no bigger than a man's hand" that was rising from the sea. Elijah knows the sign well; and as Ahab's chariot stands waiting down at the base of Carmel, the prophet's servant now bears to him the urgent request to make haste along the plain to Jezreel, whose site we could dimly descry from "the burnt place." But why does the prophet descend the mountain also, and run all the way beside the king's bounding chariot until it enters the palace gate? The action which many, not understanding, have wondered at as lowering the prophet's dignity, was a most touching revelation of his zeal for the Lord God of hosts. He, no doubt, expected that, after such a direct testimony from Heaven, there would be an immediate renunciation on the part of Ahab and all his court of the worship of idols, and a restored allegiance to the true God. The terrible disappointment of the morrow, when a price was set on his head, drove him into despondency, his life seemed a failure, "he only was left," and he fled into the distant wilderness and wished to die.

When we rode through Nazareth to our tents among the olives, four hours after our leaving Carmel, the sun was disappearing behind the highest ridge of the mountain, and the muezzin-cry from the top of the little mosque was calling the few Mohammedans in Nazareth to prayer.

XV.

At the Sea of Galilee.

Going to the grave to weep—Procession of mourners [Jer. ix. 17]—*Village of Cana—Its appearance—Women at the fountain—Scene of the miracle—The earthen jars* [John ii. 1–11]—*Pilgrims on their way to Jerusalem—Their encampment—Songs after sunset* [Ps. cxxi., cxxii.]—*The Horns of Hattin—Battle-scene—Sermon on the Mount—Natural objects around supplying the imagery—Traditional scene of miracle of feeding the five thousand—Glimpses of the Sea of Galilee—Tiberias—Observations on the sea and its shores—Sudden storms—Transparency of its waters—Silence—Variety of opinions among travellers respecting its beauty—Lake of Geneva—Different appearance in our Lord's times—Holy memories, especially in the life of Christ* [Isa. ix. 1, 2]—*The hot-baths—Their medicinal virtues—Ride along the shores—Thunder-storm—Difficulties—Jordan rapids—Cross the Jordan—Bedouin hospitality—The region beyond Jordan—Visit to Tiberias—Its history—Jewish inhabitants—Schools—A Sabbath on the Sea of Galilee—Midnight sky over the lake—The moon rising on the heights of Gadara—Thoughts of Jesus.*

WE have already mentioned that our tent was pitched at Nazareth near to a burying-ground that was shaded by olive-trees. Early in the morning, when we were making ready with some regret for our journey northward, we witnessed a procession of women, about thirty in number, coming forth from a cemetery where they had been to weep at the grave of some recently departed friend. They were still lamenting. It was not difficult to single out the chief mourners by their look of deeper sorrow. Some beat upon their breasts. At times the whole company lifted up their voices in a loud wail; more frequently the mourning took the form of a low and sadly modulated chant. The dress and unveiled countenances made it evident that they were Christian women, but the same practice prevails among the Mohammedan females; and when

they appear at early dawn in their white robes and with their faces veiled, flitting silently among the tombs, the effect is weird-like, and almost makes you wonder whether they be not themselves the risen dead. It is very probable that there were some hired mourners in that large company, and that the custom referred to by the weeping prophet so many thousand years ago has never gone out—"Consider ye and call for the mourning women that they may come, and send for cunning women that they may come; and let them make haste and take up a wailing for us, that our eyes may run down with tears, and our eyelids gush with waters."

Moving in a north-easterly direction, we came, in about two hours, to Kefr-Kenna—that is, the village of Cana, the traditional scene of our Lord's first miracle, the turning of water into wine at a marriage festival; though Dr. Robinson has argued with no little force in favour of Kana-jelil, a village which stands in a more northerly direction at about an equal distance from Nazareth. There is something altogether natural in the fact that the mother of our Lord should have friends and acquaintances in the nearest village to her home in Nazareth, that she should be invited to a marriage in one of its families, and that her wonderful Son, now rising into observation, should be asked to grace by his presence an event so interesting in their family history. The village stands on a little eminence, and has a thick cactus hedge as its wall of defence; but every other shrub and plant was forgotten by us in the abounding pomegranate-tree, which was at that time beginning to open its gorgeous scarlet blossoms to the sun. The houses were generally of a very rude description; but we could discover in some of them a pillar or sculptured lintel, the fragment of earlier greatness, like a piece of silk cloth sewn into a woollen garment. We were conducted to a Greek church of a very unpretentious description, which was said to cover the site of the house where the marriage festival was celebrated, and where the

hidden power of Jesus first blazed into miracle; and, as if to render the tradition less credible by the excess of detail, we were shown within the church six earthen jars of enormous proportions, which, when filled, would have required two or three strong men to carry each of them; and these, we were assured, were the pitchers in which, when brimful, the water was turned into wine! Of course, this must be taken as mere monkish invention; but on the supposition that this is the real Cana of John's Gospel, then that one fountain of the village at which the maidens were gossiping when we passed a little ago, must have been the very fountain from which the servants drew the water which, when turned into wine, enriched for many years to come the newly-wedded pair. There was a beautiful significance and fitness in this "beginning of miracles" by Jesus, not only as indicating how his presence and blessing transmute even the most common things into a higher good, turning the water of earth into the wine of heaven, but as giving a new and divine sanction to wedded love. What a protest, at the very entrance on his public ministry, against that apostasy one of whose marks was to be "forbidding to marry"! That which was first instituted by God in Eden before man had fallen, was now reinstituted in Cana when God appeared "manifested in the flesh."

Not long after we had left Kefr-Kenna, we came upon a company of Armenian pilgrims who were on their way up to Jerusalem to keep their holy week. They were scattered about in a large natural recess to the right of our path, and their number was great, composed of men, women, and children—probably not fewer than a hundred. They had already broken up their encampment, and were busily engaged in preparing for the day's journey. Prostrate camels were being loaded with tent materials; horses and donkeys with lighter bundles; and over the whole many-coloured and motley multitude there was a look of impatience to be gone. It was impossible not to be reminded of the annual pilgrimages of the ancient Hebrews to

Jerusalem to keep their solemn feasts, many a band of whom, gathered from the surrounding Galilean hills and valleys, must no doubt have travelled by this very path. And could we have journeyed with these modern pilgrims for a few hours, we should have discovered other points of resemblance to the old travellers of David and Solomon's times, for they too are accustomed to relieve the monotony of their journey and to encourage themselves in their progress by frequent music and sacred song. No inconsiderable portion of modern Mohammedan literature, it is said, consists of hymns prepared for the Moslem pilgrims that travel with their caravans in such multitudes from Cairo or Damascus to Mecca. And the various sects of Oriental Christians, such as the Copts, the Armenians, and the Greeks, have also their religious odes with which they commemorate dangers past, and stimulate their enthusiasm to meet the difficulties of the morrow. Particularly after sunset, when the tents have been pitched, the fires kindled, and the evening meal taken, the silence of the early night is broken by frequent songs, either sung by a single voice, or in loud and prolonged chorus, which may be heard in the villages for many miles around.

A few weeks of travelling in the East, like our own, give a wonderful air of reality to many of the allusions in those psalms which inspired pens prepared for the Hebrew pilgrims, and which for so many ages awakened the echoes of old Palestine. They have, in every line, the hue and complexion of Eastern scenery and adventure. The references to sun-stroke and to the attacks of wild beasts and robbers, appear very natural in a country where the head needs to be constantly protected from the rays of an almost vertical sun, and where the leopard, the wild boar, and the Bedouin are to this day the terror of the traveller. With our elaborately fenced and carefully macadamised roads, we have much difficulty, when at home, in appreciating the frequent allusions to the sliding of the foot in travel. But when you have journeyed for a month in a land in which

the only roads are pathways made by beasts of burden, often leading over giddy heights, or along the edge of rocky precipices, and in which a moment of giddiness, a sudden start, a false step, a loose stone, or a place made slippery by recent rains would endanger life, you then come to understand the fitness and beauty, at the close of a day's adventure and peril, of those gratefully pious words of the 121st Psalm: "My help cometh from the Lord, which made heaven and earth. He will not suffer thy foot to be moved: he that keepeth thee will not slumber. The Lord is thy keeper: the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand."

In another hour our notice was attracted by a double-crested hill on our left, in which we recognized the "Horns of Hattin." Its height is not very great, and it terminates in two peaks about sixty feet high, very like each other, and with a grassy platform between. In our own country, we should have called it "saddle-backed;" and it is very probable that it originally received its name from this very resemblance, for the two peaks, with the intervening ridge, are not unlike the two pointed horns of a camel's saddle. The place is memorable from the fact that on the plain at its base, in 1187 A.D., the Crusaders received from the army of the chivalrous Saladin that disastrous defeat which drove them from the land and made the Saracens permanent masters of the country. The little band of brave men who sought to rally their scattered fragments on the plateau at the summit, only found a more honourable death. But an infinitely more sacred interest gathers around those summits, if the tradition be true that on or near that grassy platform was the spot on which Christ called to him his twelve apostles, and on which he delivered his immortal discourse recorded in Matt v.–vii., on which account it has received the more hallowed name of the "Mount of the Beatitudes." It is curious to observe how differently modern travellers of name and authority have dealt with this tradition. Dr. Robinson argues against it

with decision, as if he were certain that this could not, at all events, be the place. The shrewd author of "The Land and the Book" holds that there is no evidence whatever in favour of the spot, and leaves the matter, at the least, an open question; while the present Dean of Westminster, who is usually slow enough to believe, decides with unwonted firmness in favour of this very scene, and finds "the conformation of the hill so beautifully in accordance with what we read in the gospel narrative as almost to force the inference that, in this instance, the eye of those who selected the spot was, for once, rightly guided."

We diverged a considerable distance from our path, and rode to a point very near the summit, and certainly our impressions, confirmed by views which we afterwards obtained from the plain of Gennesareth, were that, in this instance, local tradition, as well as the judgment of older travellers, had spoken truly. It is quite certain, from the evangelical narrative, that this great sermon of the Great Teacher was spoken on a mountain not far to the west of the Sea of Galilee. It is further obvious that the place was one of easy access to the multitudes that thronged to it, and that there must have been some verdant spot on it, convenient for hearing, in the centre of which Jesus may be supposed to have sat, surrounded by the inner circle of his apostolic band, and then by a far-extending outer circle of inquirers who had come up in thousands from the towns and villages on the northern and western shores of the lake. And it seemed to us to be nearly as certain that, both in respect to the locality of the mountain itself and to its configuration, it answers to all these conditions. Is there any other place in the whole of that region which unites in itself all these requisites? We delighted therefore to abandon ourselves to the thought that, somewhere on the summit of this mountain which slopes down so gently on its northern side to the spacious Gennesareth plain, Jesus spake that exposition of moral duty which, in purity,

spirituality, and humanity, had never been approached by any of the ethical teachings that had preceded it,—which no moral teaching since has been able to supplement or improve,—which, though it did not amend the Decalogue, yet "filled it up," ensouled it, and, as it were, transfigured it, even as the body of Jesus was afterwards made luminous and glorious on another mount,—"that heavenly summary of the life and practice of Christianity which age after age has regarded as the most sacred heritage which God has vouchsafed unto his Church."

We almost persuaded ourselves that we could discover the influence of the objects around us on more than one of the allusions in that divine discourse. The wild flowers were so abundant and luxuriant as several times to entangle themselves in our stirrups; so that when Jesus said to his hearers, "Consider the lilies how they grow," he may have had many of those very flowers springing up at his feet. We remember that Kitto identifies the lily of Palestine in a beautiful scarlet flower, its size about half that of the common tiger-lily of our own country, whose blossoms are turban-like. It grows, he tells us, in the locality where Christ delivered his discourse, and it blooms at the very season when the sermon is supposed to have been delivered. This gives additional point to his words that "even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." We came upon thorn bushes whose leaves were literally hidden by the multitude of sparrows that covered them; and "one of them," said Jesus, "cannot fall to the ground without your Father." And yonder, a day's journey towards the north, was the city of Safed sitting on the crest of a mountain some thousands of feet above those peaks of Hattin, supplying perhaps the outward picture and symbol for the moral proverb hidden in his words: "A city that is set upon a hill cannot be hid." One thing may be remarked in general, that our Lord's teachings ever derived their outward shape and colouring from the natural objects by which he was surrounded; so much so that one could almost

guess from the imagery of his lessons, and especially of his parables, in what part of the land they were spoken. Down in Judea, it is the vineyard, the fig-tree, the sheep-fold, the desert, that affords the drapery of his instructions. Up in Galilee, it is the corn-field, or the fishermen's net, or the travelling merchant, or the gorgeous flower.

But while we descended from this spot with the strong impression that it was the true "Mount of the Beatitudes," we had no patience with the ignorant and clumsy tradition which soon after pointed out to us, on the road-side, a curiously-shaped circle of stones as the scene of the great miracle of the feeding of the five thousand with the five loaves, and which even singled out one flat stone as "the dining-table of Christ." The scene of that magnificent miracle was somewhere on the other side of the Galilean lake which we were now approaching, and there was nothing around that fitted in to the picturesque narrative of the evangelist, of the multitudes arranged in fifties upon the green grass.

We quickened our pace when, a short time after, we began to obtain bright glimpses of the Sea of Galilee. But we were tantalized for nearly an hour by zigzag paths, each of which we imagined was sure to land us on its sunny shores. At length we were on level ground; and riding past the city of Tiberias, in whose shivered walls we saw traces of the terrible earthquake of 1837, we pitched our tent about a quarter of a mile southward of the city, and so near to the lake that a little child could easily have cast a stone from the door of our tent into its waters.

This little inland sea, the Lake of Cinneroth of the Old Testament, the Lake of Gennesareth,—of Tiberias,—of Galilee of the New Testament, is sixteen miles in length, while its average breadth is estimated at between six and seven miles. It is encircled by mountains on every side, except near the entrance and outflow of the Jordan; and these rise in many

places more than a thousand feet, and in general not more than a hundred yards from its margin. Various representations have been given of its shape, the greater number of them as purely conjectural as those which imaginative astronomers have given us of the constellations. "Cinneroth," says the ever witty Fuller, "is so named from Kinner, a harp in Hebrew, which it is said to resemble. Sure the high winds sometimes make but very bad music (to the ears of mariners) when playing thereupon." But his wisdom, as usual, comes limping very rapidly in the footsteps of his wit, when he adds soon after: "Indeed, an active fancy in point of resemblance will fashion anything to anything." Those come much nearer the truth who find in the lake some resemblance to a pear laid horizontally on a table, for it is broadest at its northern extremity, and it narrows and forms a kind of segment where the Jordan issues out of it. Hemmed in by lofty hills, and six hundred and fifty-three feet below the level of the Mediterranean, the climate upon its shores, unlike that of the hill-country of Nazareth which we had left only six hours before, is nearly tropical, and in summer many of the plants and flowers of India may be gathered on its banks. Indigo is cultivated in patches, and the stately palm-tree here waves its head, as we had seen down in the sultry plains of Jericho. It abounds in fish, many of them undisturbed by boat, or hook, or net, growing in quiet nooks to a great size. Some of them are queer-looking creatures, but others, resembling our own bream and perch, are excellent food; and indeed these formed our chief diet during the three days that we dwelt upon its shores. They are caught by hand-nets, which are managed by men who let them down from the rocks, or stalk about, more than half naked, in shallower places, like herons; and more frequently, as we afterwards found, by pieces of bread mixed with poison cast into the sea, which the fish swallowing greedily, soon after come up to the surface dead—a revolting practice which, had we been aware

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of sooner, would certainly have spoiled our meals. It cannot be any longer said that there is only one crazy boat upon the whole lake, for we noticed four sailing on it at one time. But these are only used for transport from one side of the lake to the other; and the practice of launching out into the deep and fishing all the night with large nets, which was common in the days of our Lord and his apostles, is now wholly unknown.

We observed various characteristics of the lake, some of which afforded interesting illustrations of passages in the gospel history. Generally, its waters became quite deep only a few steps from the shore; so that it was an admirable expedient which our Lord more than once adopted, of preaching to the people from a little ship which could be brought quite near to the beach, and yet continued to float in such deep water as effectually to protect him from pressure and interruption. And though we did not witness any storms on the lake, yet we could see in the structure of the entire region—in the numerous wadies that opened on the lake on our own side—in the ravines which divided the mountain-wall over yonder in the country of the Gadarenes, as well as in the deep gorge through which the Jordan poured its waters into it—the very machinery by which sudden gusts are produced in our own mountain tarns and lakes. These "coming down" upon the lake, according to Luke's accurately graphic description, would stir it into sudden tempest, and make it difficult for many a little ship to reach the land.

We were struck, too, with the singular transparency of the waters. When riding along on its margin some hundred feet above its surface, and looking sheer down into its depths of many fathoms, we could distinctly see the shells and pebbles at its bottom; and there is scarcely extravagance in the statement of one traveller, that a boat seen by him on its calm bosom really seemed as if it were suspended in the air. But nothing so impressed us as the silence and desolation of its

shores. There was an almost utter absence of activity and life. With the exception of Tiberias—which seems waiting for a second earthquake to engulf it—and of the little insignificant village of Magdala, there is not a single town or hamlet upon its shores in all that circuit of more than forty miles. Not only do the open tombs of the dead yawn upon you from the sides of the mountains behind, but wherever you go you are treading upon the graves of buried villages and cities.

We have been interested in noticing the strange diversity of opinion among travellers respecting the appearance of this memorable lake. Some have refused it a single element of beauty. Others, like Dr. Clarke, have spoken of its uncommon grandeur; have even described it as rivalling some of the finest lakes in Europe, and as much resembling in certain points the Lake of Geneva. Much allowance must no doubt be made for the different seasons and states of the weather in which it has been looked upon; but in any circumstances this last is an exaggerated statement. We are at this moment writing with a large portion of the Lake of Geneva spread out before us. We are looking forth upon the glorious Savoy Alps that girdle it on one side, whose many peaks, tipped with snow or clothed with dark pines, rise nine thousand feet into the bright sky, and retire behind each other as forming a kind of inner sanctuary,

> "And Jura answers through her misty shroud
> Back to the joyous Alps which call to her aloud."

We are gazing down upon those bright villages which project into the Leman Lake upon every little promontory, or nestle among their vines in every quiet bay, and we ask, What is there in all this to remind us of Gennesareth? Could we imagine one of the lonely lakes of Cumberland, such as Coniston, to be many times enlarged, we should find a nearer resemblance to the Sea of Galilee. We think of it now, so lone, and bright, and calm, and deep, circled by those walls of mountain and mirroring that azure sky, and we claim for it a certain beauty

of its own, "an immaculate charm which cannot be defaced." And when we endeavour to reproduce its appearance in other days, its waters busy with the little ships of transport and vocal with the fisherman's song,—its shores lined with at least nine large cities, and the sides of the neighbouring mountains verdant with corn-fields and gardens, or dotted with villages,—the picturesque palm mingling with the fragrant walnut and with other trees of a more temperate clime, flowers and blossoming shrubs of every hue fringing its shores and making an eternal summer, we may imagine how different was the scene on which our Lord and his apostles gazed. There are statements by Josephus which warrant every feature in this fancy picture; and nothing more impressed us as indicating the wealth and prosperity that had once marked this whole region than the long line of colonnades which we were able to trace for a mile along the shore down from Tiberias, indicating either the large extent and the earlier magnificence of that city itself, or the existence there of another city of great dimensions and splendour.

Still, it is the holy memories which cluster around this little inland sea that give to it its chief attractions, and render it by far the most interesting sheet of water in the world. And as we took our seat upon its sandy beach with its myriads of beautiful tiny shells, we gave ourselves up for a time to those hallowed associations. As Nazareth had been the home of our Lord's private life, so had Capernaum, on the northern shore of this lake, been "the magazine of his miracles," the home of his riper manhood, and the centre of his public ministry. He had chosen the greater number of his apostles from among its humble fishermen, as they mended their nets or plied their toilsome work in its quiet bays. When walking upon its beach or preaching from boats near its shores, he had taught some of his grandest lessons and spoken many of his greatest parables. Up in recesses and desert places in its neighbouring mountains, he had many a time retired to pray. Borne in the boats of

friendly fishermen, its bosom had often been a ready pathway by which he passed on his errands of divine love from one city or village on its shores to another. When he slept his sleep of innocence, pillowed in a corner of the storm-beaten ship, he had risen at the cry of his terrified disciples, and rebuked thy winds and waves, O Sea! and immediately thou didst own the presence of thy Lord and become a calm. Yea, he had walked by moonlight on thy foam-crested waves, as on a solid pavement, and piloted the creaking ship that bore in it his infant Church, to a tranquil shore. And in the brief interval after his resurrection, he returned once more to thy sandy beach, and in the early morning light, blessed his disciples with his last miracle in the great draught of fishes. In Isaiah's grand prophetic words, "In the land of Zebulon and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea, the people that walked in darkness saw a great light: they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them did the light shine."

We had time before sunset to pay a visit to the hot baths, about three-quarters of a mile further down from Tiberias on the margin of the lake. They are of extraordinary antiquity, being frequently noticed by Josephus, and mentioned by Pliny as among the natural wonders of the world. There are even allusions in the Old Testament Scriptures which indicate their existence so far back as the days of Moses and Joshua. At a little distance from the lake there are four thermal springs, whose waters are gathered into two vast reservoirs or tanks, under a dome-shaped roof which must originally have made fair pretences to elegance and ornament, but which, like everything else in this land, receives no repairs, and is slowly crumbling to ruin. The water coming from those volcanic fountains is so hot that, after remaining for some hours in the capacious tanks, it scalds the hand that is put into it, and it is only by very slow degrees that the bather can venture into its almost boiling heat. The whole atmosphere of the apartment has a

most "villanous" smell of sulphur. Its medicinal virtues are said to be wonderfully efficacious in cases of rheumatism and gout; and though we were happily free from those ailments, we yielded to the temptation of novelty, if not of need, and went down into the smoking caldron. We found the tank, which was full to the brim, to be nearly six feet in depth. It was so long and broad that there was no inconvenience in swimming in it. We came out consciously refreshed. What a luxury this place must have afforded to the Romans when Herod Antipas held court in the neighbouring Tiberias, mimicking the splendour of his imperial patron at Rome! It is to this day frequented in large numbers by sickly Jews and indolent Arabs. What hosts of invalids and fashionable loungers would gather to such a place, were it in Germany or England!

The next day was almost entirely spent by us in a ride along the shores of the lake, and along the banks of the Jordan after its outflow, our wish being to spend a few hours on the Perean side of the river. We found the oleander and the holyhock in rich luxuriance, both on the margin of the lake and of the stream. But in many places, especially on the banks of the river, we had to pilot our way among reeds twelve feet high, the haunt to this day of the wild boar and the panther. We confess to having listened nervously for the sudden crash among the reeds of some of those wild creatures aroused by us from their lair, and we had a sense of relief and gratitude when we were out once more upon the open ground. But our progress was greatly impeded by a succession of thunder-showers, which rapidly filled the clayey channels that contained the overflow of the river, and into which when our horses descended, sinking and floundering in the mire, it became rather doubtful whether they should ever come up with us again. We passed a number of little villages, whose inhabitants, evidently unaccustomed to the sight of strangers, stared upon us with vacant wonder; and we noticed that every man we met was armed to

the teeth, which indicated how unsafe and unsettled the country becomes as we approach the region in which there is no law but the old law of robbers.

The Jordan stream reminded us in many places of a Lowland river in one of the pastoral districts of Scotland. The margin was treeless; tall, rank, natural grass grew down to its very banks, and dipped into its stream; and large stones and rocks rose in many places above its surface. Its windings in this part were not so strangely tortuous as we knew them to be at so many other points between the Galilean Lake and the Dead Sea; but whenever its current was narrowed, it bounded on with the speed of a race-horse, and here and there the raging rapids tossed the river from brink to brink into angry foam. It must have been at some more favourable season of the year than this that Lieutenant Lynch and his party found their way in a boat on such a river to the Lake Asphaltites. The strongest craft must have been shivered into a hundred pieces amid such rapids as these, and the most skilful oarsmen must have been baffled and impaled upon those jagged crags. We passed more than one ruined bridge, of which nothing remained but some old crumbling pillars. But at length, when we had begun to fear that our map had misled us, we came in sight of a large stone-bridge of considerable strength, consisting of one large and two smaller arches. It was without ledges of any kind, and terrific rapids dashed beneath it. We concluded that it was the bridge by which travellers from Egypt and the west took the road to Damascus, through the region of Decapolis and the land of Gilead; and we were confirmed in this judgment by finding an ancient khan at its western side, which had evidently long stood there for the accommodation of travellers. We had, therefore, come upon one of the most important gateways to the distant east. From some signs, we were led to suspect that a band of Bedouins were encamped near the eastern extremity of the bridge; and as it was impos-

sible to guess whether their reception of us would be friendly or the reverse, there were some whispers that we were passing into a snare. We resolved that we would trust ourselves to the old law of Bedouin hospitality, and the moment we were across the bridge enter their tent and approach them as friends. This was done : coffee was produced, and we were on the best of terms. It was like smoking the pipe of peace among the Red Indians of the Far West. We cantered several miles into the country in the direction of wooded Bashan, and of balmy Gilead, the mountain home of Elijah's childhood. It was a noble pasture-land, rank with vegetation, on which the oxen of Bashan might have ranged and rioted at will. We were satisfied with having thus far met the Bedouin on his own soil, and at least touched " the region that is beyond Jordan."

We got back to our tents in time to admit of a short visit to Tiberias. Its walls, though rent in many places by the earthquake from top to bottom, had so grand and imposing a look as to give us the impression that they must inclose a city of some importance. But the casket was much better than that which it inclosed. A large portion of the area within was unoccupied. The people have gathered into the centre from the shattered walls, as if they feared that another earthquake would raze them from the foundations and bury them in the ruins. Out of a population of 2000 there are said to be a few Christian families ; there are 800 Jews, and the rest are Mohammedans. The whole place is filthy, the population squalid and sickly, especially the Jewish portion of it, and there are no streets worthy of the name ; for its houses, which are generally mud-hovels, are placed without order, and look as if they had one day been rained from the clouds. Its one sleepy bazaar seemed nearly empty alike of articles and of purchasers.

Tiberias does not date much further back than the days of our Lord and his apostles, though there are good reasons for believing that it covers the site of a much older and larger city.

It was built by that Herod Antipas who murdered John the Baptist, in honour of his patron, the Emperor Tiberius; and during the period of Roman supremacy it became the metropolis of Galilee. The peculiar and outstanding feature in its history is, that while from the beginning it was the centre of Roman authority and the scene of terrible severity and oppression to the Jewish people,—so much so that on one occasion, after an unsuccessful naval engagement on the neighbouring lake, six thousand Jews were slain in its spacious amphitheatre by command of the Emperor Vespasian,—it ultimately became the favourite resort and refuge of the scattered Jews not long after the destruction of Jerusalem. For three centuries the Sanhedrim held its assemblies within its walls; it contained schools and a university for the higher education of Jewish youths; and learned rabbins pursued their studies in it, comparatively free from molestation. The Rabbi Jonathan wrote here the Jerusalem Talmud, and it became the burying-place of the truly great and learned Maimonides. It is to this day one of the four holy cities of the Jews, along with Jerusalem, Hebron, and Safed, in which prayers are offered up for the world twice every day, without which, it is believed, it would return to its primeval chaos. Jews gather to it especially from Spain and Barbary, from Poland and Russia, in order to be buried within its hallowed precincts; for next to the valley of Jehoshaphat and the sides of Olivet, it is the highest privilege for a Jew to have a grave here. No wonder, when it is one of their most cherished expectations that the Messiah, when he comes, shall emerge from the waters of the Sea of Galilee, and first reveal himself in Tiberias; after which he shall establish his world-empire up in the mountain-city of Safed. There are still the fossilized fragments of Jewish schools in Tiberias, in which talmudical studies are pursued with a drowsy and mechanical monotony.

The morrow brought with it another of our quiet, blessed Palestine Sabbaths. We had divine service in our largest tent.

Those chapters in the gospel histories were read which narrate the principal events in our Lord's ministry on the lake, especially the sixth and the twenty-first chapters of John. There was a mingled solemnity and joy in our hearts, such as we have sometimes known on high sacramental Sabbaths at home; even our Arab muleteers and servants, who gathered around the door of our tents as onlookers, appeared to be impressed. Afterwards we sat for hours upon the silent shore, and while its waters gently rippled up to our feet, we read aloud with our friend many of those great parables which were spoken by Jesus on those very scenes, and whose immortal echoes are sounding in men's hearts at this hour in every part of the world. Far in the evening we looked forth from our tent. The placid lake seemed to be in living communion with the spangled sky above it.

> "All heaven and earth were still: from the high host
> Of stars to the lulled lake and mountain coast.
> All heaven and earth were still—though not in sleep,
> But breathless, as we grow when feeling most."

The moon was just appearing above those heights of Gadara across the lake. We thought how those silvery stars had often lighted the steps of Jesus, as he went up alone into one of those mountain recesses to pray. Did he then plead for his Church and for us?.....On the following day we were to wander among the ruins of doomed cities on the north of the lake, and then to climb the long and steep ascent to Safed, sitting on its "earth-o'ergazing" mountain so far above us.

XVI.

Under the Shadow of Hermon.

Ride through Tiberias—Magdala—Plain of Gennesareth—Khan Minyeh: Bethsaida?—The Shore-walk of Jesus [Matt. iv. 21; John xxi. 9]—*Tanks—Aqueducts—Tell-Hum: Capernaum?—Description—Discussions—"The White Synagogue"—Sculptures—Structure of the Ancient Synagogue—Gergesa—Whited sepulchres—Chorazin—Parable of the Sower illustrated—Safed—The Old Citadel—Noble panorama—Earthquake tragedies—Human selfishness—Christian sympathy—Jewish scribes and schoolmasters—Meiron—Tombs of the Prophets—Jewish carnival—Kadesh-Naphtali—City of Refuge—Beautiful solitude—Plain of Huleh* [Gen. xiv. 15]—"*Waters of Merom*"—*Pharaoh's lean kine—Hunin: Hazor?—Tributaries of the Jordan—Site of Dan—Kingdom of Bashan—Oaks of Bashan* [Isa. ii. 13]—*Ancestral trees—Banias or Cesarea Philippi—Hermon—Arab poets—Modern village—Castle of Banias—Notices in Old Testament—Greek and Roman period—Pan and the Nymphs—Banias fountain of the Jordan—Light on the Psalms* [Ps. xlii.]—"*Thou art Peter*" [Matt. xvi. 18]—*Transfiguration scene* [Matt. xvii. 2; Mark ix. 2]—*The Lebanon.*

E rode through Tiberias on our way northward along the western shores of the Lake of Galilee. We had no temptation to linger in it; for it so abounds in vermin that the Arabs have a saying that "the king of the fleas holds his court in Tiberias." Yet those who have ventured to tarry in it record interesting traces of art and earlier magnificence—such as a large basin of polished granite from the ancient quarries of Upper Egypt, six feet four inches in diameter; and a hunting-scene skilfully carved on the surface of a hard black lintel of basalt. When we came out again upon the shore, we found a half-naked fellow who had waded some distance into the lake, engaged in the revolting practice of catching fish by casting small pieces of poisoned bread into the water. We soon ascended a great way above the shore, and

our path lay along a narrow ridge of rock, from which it almost made us giddy to look into the deep, transparent lake, whose white pebbly bottom we could distinctly see many a fathom down beneath the surface of the waters.

In an hour and a half we reached Magdala,—this and Tiberias being the only inhabited places along the whole extent of the northern and western shores of the Sea of Galilee. It is now a poor little village consisting of about twenty wretched hovels, and protected from behind by a background of rocks. As we passed, the people were busily employed in erecting booths on the flat roofs of their houses, composed of green branches of trees wattled together, and rising nearly as high above the houses as the houses did above the ground. We began to think of the ancient feast of tabernacles, and to wonder whether the practice had any traditional connection with it. But our pleasant illusion was dissipated in the very act of forming, by the matter-of-fact information that the people had recourse to this expedient in order to place themselves beyond the reach of the scorpions and other vermin which swarm in their houses during the summer months. But this now shrunken village has a memory connected with it that will not die. It was the home of that Mary of Magdala, or Mary Magdalene, on whom our Lord performed one of his most benignant miracles, which she returned by a life of most devoted ministrations. The first of all the disciples at the sepulchre, the first to see her Lord after his resurrection, the first to hear him speak, the first to publish the fact of his resurrection, she has been happily styled "the apostle of the apostles." And so this place, carrying with it this sacred remembrance, has lent its name to many celebrated structures in the world—such as Magdalen College, Oxford, the Madeleine at Paris, and many others.

Soon after leaving Magdala, we were skirting along the extremity of the plain of Gennesareth, as it touches upon the limpid waters of the lake. It stretches a good many miles

inland, and it seemed to be fully a mile broad. It is the richest and loveliest of all the plains that descend from the mountains upon this sacred sea. Further inland we could see it patched with corn-fields; and on the part where we crossed it, it was covered with many varieties of fragrant and flowering shrubs, among which the oleander abounded, spreading over the white sand, and even dipping at times into the tiny rippling waves. We could quite believe that there was no exaggeration in the description by Josephus of its teeming fertility and Eden-like beauty, when it enjoyed the benefit of industrious culture and universal irrigation, and the delicious climate gave it an almost unbroken summer.

We had not gone far beyond the Gennesareth plain, when we came upon the ruins of Khan Minyeh, which some travellers have, on very insufficient grounds, affirmed to mark the site of Capernaum, but which Van de Velde affirms with unwonted confidence to be Bethsaida of Galilee; and Captain Wilson, admitting that there must have been another Bethsaida on the eastern side of the Jordan, with all the caution of a scientific traveller, and after a patient research which no other traveller has approached, accords in this opinion. Assuming this to be the fact, we recollect to have been much struck with the correspondence between the natural objects around and the evangelical narratives. We read in the Gospels that it was somewhere on the shore in the immediate neighbourhood of Bethsaida, that our Lord "called" Andrew and Peter while they were fishing; and we are also led to believe that it was at a short distance along the shore in the direction of Capernaum, that he invited into the ranks of his disciples James and John, the two sons of Zebedee, while they were mending their nets, for they too were fishermen. Now, we noticed a little way down from these ruins an exquisitely beautiful bay, white with pearly sand, which was admirably fitted for the protection of boats and the spreading of nets, and which, sheltered on either side by rising

ground, must have offered a most welcome refuge to boats in a storm. We also learned that fish abound here more than in any other part of the lake, tempting the fishermen all the way from Tiberias to come to it and ply their rude toils; and we have seen it mentioned by a modern writer, that, even at this day, one species of fish was found so packed together at this place, that a shot from a revolver, in one instance, killed three of them. It is also noticeable that, on other parts of the shore generally, large volcanic stones abound, rendering walking difficult, if not impossible, but in this neighbourhood there are no such impediments; and the conjecture has therefore been reverently thrown out that this may have been the favourite shore-walk of the Saviour, and that in some of those sheltered, sandy nooks running up into the land, there may probably have been the spot where Jesus had the fire kindled and "the fish laid thereon and bread," to refresh his famished disciples after their long night of "bootless, darkling" toil on the lake.

Again and again, as we wended our way eastward not far from the shore, we came upon objects which told their own story of an earlier industry,—broken cisterns, and tanks of great dimensions, sometimes containing water with little fishes swimming in them, and at other times floating beautiful aquatic plants or nearly filled with tall grass; and fragments of strong aqueducts which had once carried vigorous streams to irrigate the Gennesareth plain, but which now, after flowing a little way, poured out their strength into the air—emblem of the land with its enormous wasted power.

At length, when we were about two miles from the influx of the Jordan into the lake, we found ourselves in the midst of ruins, whose position, appearance, and great extent at once assured us were of no common interest. We were standing at Tell-Hum, which discussion and examination seem more and more certainly to identify as the ancient Capernaum. It is an entire ruin—the woe which Christ pronounced on it having

fallen on it to the uttermost; for there is not a single complete habitation or human inhabitant within the boundaries of the old "toll city," once so busy with trade and vocal with the hum of multitudes. And this utter destruction is all the more remarkable, because its houses appear to have been generally built of black basalt—a kind of stone which resists the influence of climate, and remains unchanged for thousands of years. The thistles, thorns, and briers which grew among the more than half-buried ruins entangled us at every moment, and used very unpleasant liberties with our clothes. But in the midst of all these, and laid in every conceivable position, we could trace chiselled columns, finely-carved entablatures, and sculptured capitals. "A few of these, if carried home," said Dr. Deutsch, "would make the fortune of any museum in England." At times the whole spectacle reminded us of a stormy sea that had been instantaneously frozen. Again, it appeared like some vast cemetery or churchyard, whose tombstones and monuments had all been upheaved and shattered by an earthquake, and whose yawning graves stood half-open; and we seemed to hear that solemn, omnipotent voice breaking the doleful silence, "Woe unto thee, Capernaum!" It stands on an eminence that projects into the sea and gradually slopes down to its waters; and it was impossible to have selected a more convenient place as the centre of our Lord's ministry in that portion of the land, because, by a boat shooting out from it, he could easily have been carried in a little time to any spot either on the Galilean or on the Perean side of the lake.

But what warrant have we to believe that this Tell-Hum is indeed the half-buried Capernaum of our Lord's times, for the fact has been keenly disputed by men of acknowledged authority in such matters? We have failed to perceive the force of some of the arguments in favour of this opinion that have been advanced by Captain Wilson and others; but there are three which appear to us to have much weight in them, and to turn the

balance of probabilities in favour of this spot. No experienced traveller will make light of the evidence derived from the name which a place has long received from the natives dwelling in its vicinity. But Capher-nahum (Capernaum) is in fact two words signifying the village of Nahum. Nothing is more common in the East (and in fact it is not uncommon anywhere) than for men to drop one of the syllables of a word that is frequently in their mouths. We had evidence of this on the morning of that very day in the crowd of importunate beggars, who had abbreviated their everlasting cry of "backsheesh" into "sheesh." Is the conjecture then unlikely that "Capher-nahum" may gradually have undergone this shortening process into Capher-Hum? In which case it was almost a matter of necessity that, when the town ceased to be inhabited and became a heap of ruins, Capher should be changed into Tell, which signifies a mound or heap, and that Capher-Hum should thus become Tell-Hum. It would be easy to produce fifty changes far more improbable in the popular nomenclature of places in our own country. Then the distance of Capernaum from the Jordan, as stated by Josephus, corresponds exactly with that of Tell-Hum —which is not the case with Khan Minyeh, or any other ruin on which the conjectures of some have fixed as the true lost city; while the topographical indications given in the inspired histories regarding Capernaum are not at variance with anything in the position and aspect of this ruin. And there is no little force in the question, which was repeatedly asked by us on the spot, If this be not Capernaum, what is it? Is there any other city known to have stood on the northern margin of this lake which could with equal probability be identified with ruins so extensive and ancient?

Unquestionably the most important discovery made among these ruins by Captain Wilson and his associates, was the "White Synagogue" mentioned by Josephus, which may have been repaired and even in some measure rebuilt, but which was

probably the very synagogue in which our Lord was accustomed to worship when Capernaum was his home, and in which he preached at least one memorable discourse. Unlike the private houses, it was built of white limestone obtained from a mountain not far off, of so fine a grain and admitting of such delicate carving with the sculptor's chisel, that, to an unscientific eye, it is not easy to distinguish it from marble. We can imagine the thrill of delight with which this distinguished savan, in conducting his excavations around the site of the synagogue, turned up a slab of large dimensions which had distinctly sculptured on it the pot of manna; especially when he thought how the eye of the Great Teacher must often have rested on this very object, and how it may have suggested that allusion in the sermon which he delivered within the precincts of the synagogue, —"Our fathers did eat manna in the desert, as it is written, He gave them bread from heaven to eat. But my Father giveth you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he which cometh down from heaven and giveth life unto the world."

One solid gain to sacred archæology was made by Captain Wilson, in his verifying the usual style and structure of the ancient synagogues; for they appear to have been constructed according to a common plan, and this Capernaum-synagogue gives us a distinct and definite conception of them all. We were able in part to confirm the accuracy of his description by personal observation, especially by comparison with another ruin, a large portion of whose walls was yet standing. Its form is rectangular, its largest dimensions being from north to south. Its interior is divided into four aisles by four rows of columns, the intercolumnar spaces not being very wide; and the entrance is by three doors opening from the south. Imagine the form of Jesus moving in the midst of those tall columns, or the president of the synagogue looking down from his place into that countenance which, without exaggeration or metaphor, might

have been described as "the human face divine." Modern discovery has thus dispelled the very common illusion that the ancient synagogue was destitute of all architectural ornament; and it may fairly be held as having proved that the Jews of our Lord's times did not interpret the second commandment with such an excess of literality as to hold themselves forbidden to make any representation of objects by sculpture, as many of the more fanatical followers of Mohammed understand the precept at the present day. On the Capernaum synagogue there was also found sculptured what seemed a reed in high relief, which was regarded as meant to represent Aaron's rod that budded; while on the walls and columns of other synagogues there were discovered, elegantly carved, the seven-branched candlestick, bunches of grapes, festoons of vine leaves, and even the paschal lamb.

Standing on an elevated point among the ruins, and looking through a powerful glass along the eastern side of the lake, it was not difficult, with the help of our dragoman Nejim, who had explored the whole region with Wilson, to identify the district of Gadara, and even the ruins of Gergesa, the village-capital of the district, which the evangelists mention as the scene of the destruction of the herd of swine. We believe the place was first certainly verified through its name by our acute namesake at Beyrout. And it is remarkable that, while the ground is usually level for some distance from the lake, there is one point in the vicinity of Gergesa where the higher ground protrudes with a rapid slope into the waters, so that it seems certain that this was the steep place down which the maddened brutes ran so violently, and perished in the sea. It is thus that careful and patient research is gradually fixing the spots of Biblical interest, and attesting the accuracy of the sacred writers. It has been severely remarked that Um Keiss, which in one of our modern dictionaries of the Bible has been named as the scene of this extraordinary incident, would have required the

swine to have taken a hard gallop of three miles before tumbling into the lake!

The same successful explorer discovered two remarkable tombs at the northern extremity of Tell-Hum, which still bear the distinct marks of having been "whited sepulchres."

A valley passes down to the lake near Capernaum; and entering this by what seem the outlines of an ancient street, and moving northward, you come in an hour—that is, at two and a half miles distant—upon another remarkable heap of ruins, to which the natives give the name of Keraseh. It is the same place which was mentioned by Pococke long ago as Gerasi, and in later times by Richardson under the name of Chorazi; and guided by the name, and also by the suitableness of the position, it seems natural to conclude that this is Chorazin, the last in the triplet of woe-stricken cities. Many of its houses, built of the almost indestructible basalt, were found to be so complete when excavated, as to afford a very clear conception of the plan and style of private houses at the time when Christianity dawned upon Palestine. They were generally square, and varied considerably in size; the largest being thirty feet. Two columns, passing down the centre, supported the roof—which was flat, as in modern houses. The doorway opened in the centre, and there were several windows about a foot in length and half a foot in width. The larger houses were divided into four chambers. Is it unlikely that it was some such house as one of these that formed for a time the earthly dwelling-place of the Saviour of the world?

We were not unwilling, after toiling and stumbling all the morning among ruins, and tearing our way through the midst of thorns and briers, to get out once more into the open country, and to pursue our uninterrupted course to Safed, which was shining on its proud eminence far above us, without a single cloud upon its head. We had not ridden far when we came upon a scene which greatly interested us. We were passing through a

newly-ploughed field, and "a sower had come forth to sow." Every part of the picture in the parable of the Sower, which our Lord delivered to his disciples down on the margin of the neighbouring lake, was enacted and visible before us. There was the beaten path on which some particles of seed had fallen, which were speedily picked up by multitudes of wild birds. There was the rocky ground with its thin layer of earth upon it. And here and there were dwarfish thorn-bushes which the husbandman had not grubbed up, and which, growing with the growth of the corn-stalks among them, would ultimately choke and destroy them. And then there were large patches of deep, loamy soil which might be expected to yield a various abundance. Our Lord could thus easily have found the whole drapery of his great parable in the immediate neighbourhood of the spot on which it was spoken, ever linking his spiritual lessons with those familiar doings of common life which occupy

> "The talk
> Man holds with week-day man, in the hourly walk
> Of the world's business."

We reached Safed early in the afternoon, after a toilsome ascent of twelve miles in which every step was a strain upon our patient horses; and we pitched our tents in an olive-garden from which we could look down even upon the lofty mountain-city itself. The grand old citadel, originally built by the Saracens, and which exchanged hands again and again during the varying fortunes of the wars of the Crusaders, is the highest point from which to look out upon the country; but it had been so riven by the terrible earthquake of 1837, and was so inconvenient to ascend, that we preferred leaving it to the vultures which seemed waiting there for another long festival of human blood, and to gaze down upon the immense panorama from Safed itself. It commands the most extensive view to be obtained from any point within the circle of Palestine. We were considerably more than two thousand feet above the level

of the Galilean lake which we had left in the morning, and fully twelve miles from its shores; and yet, as it spread its bright mirror in placid loneliness, incased in its green framework of hills, it seemed so very near, that we could have imagined an expert slinger to have sent a stone from Safed into its waters. It mirrored the graves of buried cities, for Tiberias was the only habitation of living men that we could see upon its shores. Far in the east were the Hauran mountains, wrapped in hazy gloom; nearer were the green pastoral hills of Gilead. More directly southward, familiar objects rose up before us which we had left for ever—the cone-shaped Tabor, with little Hermon, and the hills of Samaria beyond the plain of Esdraelon; and as the eye moved westward, it fell on the promontory of wooded Carmel, and caught glimpses of the dim Phenician shores. Even in its desolation and decay the words of the prophet came to our lips, "How beautiful is thy land, O Emmanuel." We felt that there was a scenic fitness in the Jewish tradition which has fixed on this as the place where the Messiah is to set up his throne, when he comes to take possession of the kingdom of his fathers, and to rule the world.

It was impossible to stand where we did and not remember that this very Safed had been the scene of one of the most terrific tragedies of modern times, when "God arose to shake terribly the earth." On the evening of the first day of January 1837, this mountain-city was visited by an earthquake which swallowed up six thousand human beings in an hour. There is not a single old house in the modern town. The old houses were either shivered into fragments, or went down into that yawning grave when the stable earth heaved like an angry sea, or was convulsed like some strong creature in its agony. What harrowing scenes of half-buried men and women dying and putrefying by slow degrees; and of faint voices, heard through the openings and crevices by those shuddering on the surface, who could give them no relief! But we confess that, in reading the

narrative of those woes, it was not the suffering that most shocked us, but the exhibitions of human selfishness after the earthquake had done its dreadful work, when the survivors, becoming indifferent to each other's sorrows, contended for the treasure for which they searched in rents and crevices and among ruined buildings, with all the ferocity with which the wolves and vultures were meanwhile quarrelling over their horrid banquet of death. The despair which is the effect of sudden judgments, instead of making men penitent, sometimes makes them fiendish, as has once more been seen in the terrible nine days of the Commune in Paris.

> "There is no love in man's obdurate heart;
> It does not feel for man: the natural bond
> Of brotherhood is severed as the flax
> That falls asunder at the touch of fire."

The one gleam of sunshine which lighted up that double darkness came from the Protestant missionaries at Beyrout, who hastened in the depth of winter to the scene, and with their extemporized hospitals reared by their own hands, and with all the appliances of medicine, surgery, and cordials, relieved a world of suffering, and showed something of the true spirit of the great Healer whose name they bore.

It is a remarkable fact that though Safed is not mentioned, or even alluded to, in the Old Testament, and it has no connection at any point with ancient Jewish history, it has become one of the four sacred cities of the Jews in Palestine. Even since the earthquake, when nearly all its inhabitants perished, Jews have crept to it from the northern shores of Africa, and from every point in Europe, from Spain to Russia; and out of its present population of six thousand, three thousand are understood to be of the house of Israel, and these observe in their synagogues the same distinctions of nationality as we have seen in modern Jerusalem. A goodly number of them perform the work of the scribes of old, and occupy themselves in making copies of the Law. And nothing can exceed the beauty and

scrupulous accuracy of their workmanship. Every precaution is used to secure the most perfect exactness. Every page must contain the same number of lines, and every line the same number of letters. A single failure in this would vitiate an entire column of the work. It is an inherited excellence from which the Jews have never degenerated since they first became the chosen custodiers of the oracles of God. Among the many severe charges which Christ brought against them as a people, he never blamed them with unfaithfulness to this great trust. Their scrupulosity has, in fact, passed into superstition; but God has made even this to praise him.

In all their sacred cities, also, the Jews appear to pay a creditable attention to the education of their young. We spent some time in one of their schools. The old teacher, with his long white beard, his noble forehead, and nose "spectacle-bestrid," appeared as if he had walked out from a picture of one of the old Italian masters. He used an iron pointer to guide his pupils as they read before him, one by one, out of the Talmud. The head of each pupil was covered by a linen cap which fitted closely to it. As they read, they swung their bodies to and fro, and with a singing accent that almost approached to chanting; and as often as they blundered, the venerable pedagogue interrupted them with an air of wondrous authority, as if he were fully conscious that he was the one ruler of that little world. The more learned among their rabbins have many curious fancies about their Messiah, which prove that the veil over their minds has been readjusted but not taken away.

There was a place of peculiar interest lying in a hilly region considerably out of our direct way northward, to which we were tempted to diverge on our leaving Safed on the following morning. This was Meiron, the Westminster Abbey of the Jews, where are shown the tombs of many of their most illustrious teachers and miracle-workers, some of them dating even

earlier than the birth of Christ. To us the most interesting among the many sepulchres was that of Hillel, the head of one of the two great rival rabbinical schools that waged their loud logomachies at the close of Judaism, and the reputed grandfather of that Gamaliel at whose feet Saul of Tarsus had sat for years as an ardent and admiring disciple. It was cut out of the solid rock, and was of great size. But more honour seemed to be put on the tombs of those who united to their prophetical office the gift of miracles, and lamps were kept burning before them day and night. Had we been a fortnight later in our visit, we should have witnessed the annual Jewish carnival at these tombs, to which we were told thousands congregate in the month of May, converging to this remote mountain-village from almost every nation under heaven, and bringing the varied costume and speech of lands as far asunder from each other as the equator from the poles. There is scarcely anything of the nature of a religious element in these festivals; the time being consumed in eating and drinking, in dancing and mimic sword-combats performed to the sound of music and the clapping of hands, and not unmixed with that levity and excess which gave occasion to the scathing rebukes which the old prophets addressed to their fathers. One prominent and expensive part of the celebration is the burning o gifts, and especially of rich shawls, dipped in oil to make them burn the more brightly, in honour of the dead.

We were glad to come out at length from the damp and darkness of these old tombs into the open air and the daylight, and to turn our faces towards Cesarea Philippi, the most northerly town in Palestine, which we hoped to reach on the following day.

In the afternoon we came upon a place of much Biblical interest—Kedes, the ancient Kadesh-Naphtali, one of the royal cities of the Canaanites, and one of the six Cities of Refuge of the Hebrews. It stands on a plain, in a considerably elevated mountain-region, and has near it two great structures more

than half in ruins, displaying so much architectural skill and ornament as well as freshness, that we should imagine them to have belonged to the period of the Roman supremacy. We thought of it as the convenient rallying-point of Barak before his conflict with Jabin. But it was more interesting to remember that it was one of those sanctuaries which the discriminating humanity of the old Jewish law provided as a refuge for those who had slain another unwittingly. Its central position, and the fact that it was visible from a great distance and in almost every direction, admirably fitted it for its compassionate uses. We imagined the terrified man-slayer straining and panting along the plain, with the avenger of blood close on his steps, and the man gratefully conscious of safety the moment that he stood within its open gates.

Not long after leaving Kedes, our way led through a narrow gorge which was singularly grand and solitary. We rode by the green margin, and sometimes in the pebbly bed, of a bright joyous stream, hemmed in on either side by richly-wooded mountains that rose far into the sky and seemed to shut out the whole world. The solitude and the silence were extraordinary, though they were pleasantly relieved at intervals by the sight of goatherds leading their flocks on green spots, and making rude music to them on their reeden pipes. It seemed the very place for a hermit to hide himself in from the shock of the world's conflicts, with its "boundless contiguity of shade." Other persons had anticipated us in this judgment; for near the entrance to this natural sanctuary we came upon a village with a number of peak-roofed cottages, containing a colony of Arabs who had fled hither all the way from Algiers to escape the dubious benefits of French discipline and drill.

A few hours' riding on the following morning brought us up to a lofty ridge, from which we looked forth upon objects that rivetted our attention. Beneath us was the extensive plain of Huleh, the scene of Abraham's rescue of Lot, and of his vic-

tory over the five confederate kings. It was down also somewhere in that marshy plain that Joshua, by one of those sudden, impetuous, irresistible onslaughts which were characteristic of his manner of assault, swept before him with terrible destruction the combined myrmidons under Jabin, king of Hazor, and in one day secured for Israel the whole of the northern part of Canaan. At the southern extremity of the valley was the Lake of Huleh, the Samachonitis of Josephus, the "waters of Merom" of Old Testament story; unapproachable by us because of its dangerous swamps, but the choice refuge of the larger aquatic birds and of almost every wild animal that has its habitat in Palestine. We noticed herds of lean buffaloes plunging and disporting themselves, after their own ungainly fashion, in its mire and among its rushes. The stork and the heron are there in their element, and even the pelican is sometimes seen—

> "By the rushy fringëd bank
> Where grow the willow and the osier dank."

The aromatic reed, the cane, and the calamus abound in its marshes. In the colder months of the year the lake shrinks into the dimensions of a pond, being not more than five hundred paces in circumference. But in March and the beginning of April, when the snows on Hermon have begun to melt into innumerable rills, and the different branches of the Jordan rush down in brimful channel, it extends to seven miles in width, and covers a large portion of the Huleh plain. It is then that the wild beasts, dislodged from their lairs among the tall reeds by the sudden increase of the waters, appear in formidable numbers, mightily enraged at being driven from their hiding-place. One meeting a panther, or even a wild boar or a buffalo, in such circumstances, would have no difficulty in understanding how the picture should have been employed in more than one place in Scripture, as the emblem of mingled rage and strength,—"coming up as a lion from the swellings of Jordan." The figures and allusions in the poetical books of the Bible,

everywhere reflect the scenery and the natural history of Palestine. They are indelibly stamped upon them, like the old Abrahamic features upon the Jew. They bear the impress of the Jordan-land quite as distinctly as the earlier poetry of Tennyson does the imagery of the fens of Lincolnshire, or that of Scott does of the heathy moors, the rugged mountains, and the green glens of Scotland.

Still keeping above the plain, and moving northwards, we came upon a fortress of extraordinary magnitude and strength, known in modern days by the name of Hunin. The inhabitants of the miserable village of the same name have their houses in a narrow corner of the mysterious and moat-encircled pile; and there is ample room in the enormous ruin for their expanding, should they be multiplied a hundredfold. The various styles of architecture traceable in the building have not a little puzzled archæologists; but the Phenician masonry visible here and there, places beyond doubt the great antiquity of some parts of it. Some say that it is Beth-roboh; even the Canaanitish Hazor puts in a dubious claim.

Descending by tortuous paths into the Huleh valley, we crossed the most westerly branch of the Jordan as it comes down from the neighbourhood of Hasbeîya, far up in the Lebanon. It is spanned by a bridge of three arches; but the stream, when we passed it, was only flowing under the middle arch. Soon after, we crossed a narrower stream, which formed a second tributary of the sacred river; and a few yards beyond, we sat down to rest on a natural mound under the far-spreading branches of a noble patriarchal oak that might have rivalled in size and foliage Abraham's oak at Mamre. We could now see that this second stream was fed from a little cup-shaped lake into which a noble fountain discharged itself. And beyond this fountain was a grassy tell, or mound, littered with ruins, which has been identified as the site of the old city of Dan, the place where Jeroboam set up one of his golden

calves for the Israelites to worship, and which marked the northern extremity of the tribal territories. "The erection of these calves," remarks the sagacious Fuller, "was pretended for the ease of the people of Israel, to spare their tedious travel twice a year to Jerusalem; but in effect occasioned that they were sent a longer journey on a worse errand, even into irrecoverable captivity. Thus to spare a step of piety, is to spend many on the road to misery."

Then our way led us through an extensive region of great natural beauty and inexhaustible fertility. It was part of the ancient kingdom of Bashan. Almost every tree that had become familiar to us in Palestine grew here, except the palm —the myrtle, the almond, the arbutus, the hawthorn, the birch, and above all, and holding firm and fast possession of its ancient home, the oak of Bashan. There was no tangled undergrowth of brushwood, but the trees cast their long shadows on a beautiful carpet of green. It brought to our remembrance, even in its unpruned luxuriance, some of the noblest parks of England with their ancestral baronial trees. In an hour we had reached Banias, the site of the ancient Cesarea Philippi, and had pitched our tents in the midst of an extensive grove of olives, and beneath the very shadow of the mighty Hermon.

It is certainly one of the most grand and picturesque places in all Palestine. Immediately behind, Hermon, the highest peak of Anti-Libanus, rises to a height of ten thousand feet, densely wooded on its side, and its summit diademed with eternal snow pure as the azure sky above it. Its name in Arabic is Jebel-esh-Sheikh, the prince of mountains; and it is well entitled, as it sits there solitary in its royal state, to be thus regarded as the Mont Blanc of Western Asia:—

> "They crowned him long ago
> On a throne of rocks, with a robe of clouds
> And a diadem of snow!"

The Arab poets have a beautiful saying, in allusion to the

various climates that exist on Hermon—that it bears winter on its head, spring upon its shoulders, and autumn in its bosom, while summer lies sleeping at its feet. This has evidently suggested one of the most beautiful stanzas ever written by Thomas Moore. Around this grand centre rise many lofty peaks of various heights; and as we looked up on them in their untainted virgin purity, we could have imagined an angel visitant who was leaving our earth, flying from one pinnacle to another, until he took his long flight to heaven.

The modern village of Banias is a confused collection of miserable huts, inhabited chiefly by the lowest class of Mohammedans; but a little way to the left of the village, there stands the majestic ruin of the Castle of Banias, dating, as we may be certain from the marks upon it of Phenician masonry, some centuries before the Advent. It is built on the rocky crest of a projecting spur of Hermon, which rises a thousand feet above the village, and it is itself several hundred feet higher, so that a stone dropped perpendicularly from its walls would fall at once twelve or thirteen hundred feet.

There are notices in the older Scriptures which favour the conjecture that this may have been one of the scenes in which Baal had a temple, for the worship of this Phenician god spread over the whole extent of the Anti-Libanus. What place so fitly answers to those words in the Book of Joshua, of "Baal-gad in the valley of Lebanon, under Mount Hermon"? When Grecian conquest had swept over Syria, the Greeks supplanted the worship of Baal by that of the Grecian Pan, finding in the natural features of the place everything they could desire as a πανειον, or sanctuary for their favourite deity—a cave, a fountain, and shady sylvan glades. Hence its ancient name, Panias, which it retains in its Arabic form of Banias at the present day. On the front of a rock, about twenty feet above a natural cave, we saw three niches which had originally been occupied by idols. The centre niche still contains the fragment of a pedestal on

which an image once stood; and an inscription in Greek above it, which has more than once been carefully deciphered, bears that it was "dedicated to Pan and the nymphs." It was the only unmistakable remnant of idolatry that we had met with in Palestine. When the mighty wave of Roman conquest swept away in its turn the dominion of Greece, Philip, the son of Herod the Great, erected a temple, it is probable, on the same spot, in honour of the Emperor Tiberius who had made him tetrarch of Iturea and Trachonitis, and at the same time enlarged and beautified the city as the capital of his tetrarchy, mingling the name of his imperial patron and hero-god with his own in its Roman designation of Cesarea Philippi.

But by far the most interesting natural object in this magnificent region was the Banias fountain of the Jordan. Our great Milton is mistaken when he speaks of the Jordan as "the double-founted stream," for we had that day already crossed two independent streams flowing from separate springs—the Hasbany, which had come twenty miles down from the Lebanon hills; and the Leddan, springing forth at once in splendid force, like Jupiter from the head of Minerva, from near the site of ancient Dan. But this Banias fountain, which is the most eastward, seems to have been regarded in the days of Josephus as the true Jordan fountain; and undoubtedly it is that which a painter would prefer as by far the most picturesque—the fit birth-place of the most sacred of all rivers. From a mossy rock in the side of Hermon it gurgles forth pure and bright, and so strong that it is some feet broad a few yards from the spot where it leaps into light. Again and again we knelt down and drank of its waters at their very source. We gathered a few specimens of "maiden's-hair" fern that dipped in its sparkling current. We then followed its rapid course through the midst of beautiful creeping plants and waving oleanders, beneath little bridges and over broken columns and rounded boulders, until it leaped down by a succession of cascades into more level

ground beneath. We then stood and thought of this young river as the emblem of many a life beginning pure and bright, bounding on in beauty and hope, spreading a faithful mirror to the sun-lit firmament, and by night to the stars, but at length mingling with itself corrupting elements, becoming turbid and violent, and losing itself at length in the Sea of Death.

Is this the region of Hermon to which David so pathetically refers in one of his psalms? A glance at some parts of the scenery strongly inclines us to answer, Yes. He pictures himself as having been driven by persecution to "the utmost corner of the land," and as having found a hiding-place, with a little band of chivalrous followers, among the roots of Hermon. His refuge seems to have been in a natural cave, and the time of his exile during a season of storm, when a thousand foaming cascades might be heard leaping from the mountains, and the whole region sounding with the dash and roar of cataracts—"deep calling unto deep." There were natural caves in abundance not far from our tent among the olive-trees; and though in the calm of a beautiful afternoon we could only hear the ripple of the Jordan as it issued from its rocky bed, yet when we looked up, we could see the mountain seamed and scarred in many places by the marks of torrents, when the snows had been rapidly melting, or the tempest had been let loose.

But beyond this, the region is associated, by more than one incident, with "David's Son and Lord." These "coasts" or borders of Cesarea Philippi were the most northerly point to which Christ came in his journeys of mercy; and to the reader of the Gospel narratives it still bears his indelible footprints. It was in this place, on Peter's declaring his faith in him as "the Christ, the Son of the living God," that he addressed him in those memorable words, "Thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." But is it possible to doubt that the eye of the great Master and his disciples was turned, while he spoke, to that

Castle of Banias, standing upon its rocky base a thousand feet high and filling up the whole view eastward, and that he doubled the impression of his sayings, as he so often did, by surrounding them with the framework and casting on them the colouring of a natural picture?

And all the hints in the Gospel histories give something beyond a mere likelihood to the belief that one of those peaks of Hermon was the true scene of our Lord's transfiguration. That most sublime incident is declared to have occurred when he was with his disciples "in the coasts of Cesarea Philippi." The cone-shaped Tabor, down on the borders of Samaria, has nothing in its favour beyond a not very ancient tradition. One of those solitary Hermon peaks was the true "holy mount" to which Jesus ascended with his three favoured disciples a little before sunset. We stood for a time looking up, and wondering much which of them it might be. On one of these Jesus appeared for a time enrobed in the heavenly body of his ascension, when his raiment was whiter than Hermon's untrodden snow, and his countenance shone more brightly than that setting sun now going down in his strength. It not merely became the meeting-place of the great lawgiver and the chief prophet of the older dispensation with the apostles of the new, but the spot where earth and heaven met; while its solitudes echoed the sounds of that Divine voice which spake from the midst of the dazzling glory-cloud, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him." Hermon became in that sacred, awful hour something more than the "holy of holies."

The next morning, we were to proceed on our mountain-journey through the Lebanon, and to leave Palestine behind us for ever.

XVII.

On the Lebanon.

Pilgrims—The dew of Hermon [Ps. cxxxiii.]—*Lebanon geography—Native farmers—Signs of ancient Baal—Worship—Hasbeiya—A marriage procession—Scene of the massacres of* 1860—*Causes—Native missionary—Hymn-singing of Arab children—Syrian source of the Jordan—Lake of Huleh—Rapids and cataracts—A mystery explained—Rasheia—Violent change of temperature—The ox-goad—First sight of Damascus—Antiquity—Wonderful history—Quarrel with the dragoman—Inconvenience—Little Syrian maid—Hotel Dimitri—Abana, "river of Damascus"—The Protestant missionaries—Class for young men—Scenes of the massacre—Intensity of fanaticism—Biblical scenes—Naaman the Syrian—The window in the wall—"The street called Straight"—A native court of justice—A slave-market—The bazaars—Workshops of the silversmiths—Public gardens—After sunset—House of a merchant prince—Departure—Pharphar—Fountain of Fidji—Rock scenery—Gipsies—The Baka'a—Baalbec—Questions—"The cedar saints"—The sources of wealth—Trees—The French road—The electric telegraph—Approach to Beyrout—Syrian Protestant college—Dr. Van Dyck—Dr. Bastani—Miss Taylor—Mrs. Bowen Thompson—Free Church mission—Relation of Beyrout to Lebanon and the East*—[Ps. lxxii. 16].

AS we were leaving Banias early on the morning of April 15th, to enter on our journey through the Lebanon, a large company of pilgrims passed us, on their way to some Wely, or prophet's tomb. They were a motley multitude of both sexes, with a considerable mixture of children; and were dressed in every variety of Eastern costume, some of them looking most amusingly grotesque. The amount of religion in these pilgrimages, which are by no means uncommon in the East to this day, is of an almost inappreciable quantity. A few mystic ceremonies that have long since lost all the significance they ever had, are performed around the sacred spot, and eating and drinking, singing and dancing, and sometimes also mimic sword-combats, occupy the greater part of their time;

and the chances are not small that some of the worst features of heathen revels shall show themselves ere the pilgrimage is ended.

As we looked up on the grand old monarch-mountain, clad in that mantle of snow which has rested on its shoulders since the Deluge, and shining in the dazzling morning light, we could see the propriety of those other names by which it is known in the earlier Scriptures—"Shirion" and "Shenir," both meaning "the breastplate;" for how like is that glistening front of snow to the polished armour of a giant. And if we suppose Sion, "the upheaved," to be either another name for Hermon itself, or for one of the lesser peaks that surround it, then that passage in Psalm cxxxiii., which has perplexed so many commentators, becomes all clear and beautiful,—"As the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Sion." The hot vapours ascending from the base of the mountain would be condensed as they rose near to the snowy region on its summit, and would descend in copious dews upon the lower hills, covering them with a rich and eternal robe of verdure.

As we pass around the western base of Hermon, we gradually find our way into the narrow valley hemmed in by hills on either side, down which there flows the remotest tributary of the Jordan from the neighbourhood of Hasbeîya. And here, as we wend our way among those grassy eminences, let us take out our map and adjust our geographical knowledge of the region in which we are to journey for the better part of a week to come. That to which we are accustomed to give the general name of Lebanon is, in fact, a double range of mountains separated from each other by a remarkable hollow, in some places twenty miles broad—known in the earlier times as Cœle-Syria, in our own days as the Baka'a—and watered by the Leontes, or Litany, and the Orontes. The more northerly of these mountain-chains is Lebanon proper, which begins in fact at Mount Amanus, an offshoot of Mount Taurus; and while

reaching its grandest elevation in the region in which we are now journeying, is continued, on a lower scale, all through the western side of Palestine and onward to the barren ridges of Sinai. The more southern chain is Anti-Libanus, whose highest peak is Hermon; and which may be described in the same general way, as extending southward on a lower level and on the eastern side of the Jordan, in the mountains of Gilead, Moab, and Edom, and terminating in those hills which skirt the eastern shores of the Red Sea. It is along the northern side of Anti-Libanus that we are now to journey eastward, with the city of Damascus before us as our goal. We are at home among those mountains, and soon become conscious of the invigorating power of the mountain air; and though we are now out of Palestine, we are still, as it were, in the outer court of the temple. For we cannot forget that, in the palmiest days of Jewish history, Lebanon was subject to the sceptre of Jewish kings, and that this "goodly mountain," which Moses so longed to see, has supplied to Hebrew poetry some of its grandest images and allusions; and that, as a quaint old writer has said, "it was Solomon's botanic garden, for he took his natural history from the cedar that grows on Lebanon, to the moss on the wall."

As we rode cheerfully along, we were struck by the improved style of agriculture which everywhere showed itself, as compared with what we had seen in Palestine. In many places the cornfields were fenced with some care, and weeding was carried on with some vigour. And we found, in addition to the native farmers—who are for the most part Maronite Christians—men all the way from Tyre and some of the northern towns of Palestine, holding farms in these districts, allured by the exceeding productiveness of the soil. One person on horseback, who had ridden all the way from his home on the shores of the Mediterranean, was taking careful note of the work that had been done on his farm, and of the state of his crops, as we passed. And

we were not less struck with the lingering signs of ancient Phenician idolatry, or Baal worship, which now began to show themselves, and which increased upon us from day to day. These were traceable both in the designations of many places to which the name of Baal was attached, and in the ruins of Baal temples which were visible on so many eminences; as the old prophets complained, "on every high hill;" one reason for this location being, that the worshippers might catch the first rays of the rising sun—for Baal worship was, in fact, sun worship.

We got to Hasbeîya early in the afternoon. It is a picturesquely situated town, of considerable size and importance, built on both sides of a stream which goes to swell the waters of the infant Jordan, that passes down the central valley not far off. Hills of moderate size, terraced to their summits with vineyards and olive-gardens, rise on either side; while old Hermon presents, in his pine-clad sides and snowy summit, a background of great sublimity. We found the town in a state of universal commotion when we entered it. The people were out from their houses, and clustering like bees on every available point for observation. We noticed one poor maniac, all but naked, and seated far up upon a ruin, who had caught the excitement, and was waiting with vacant smile to witness the spectacle, whatever it might be. It turned out to be a marriage procession, in which the bride was being publicly conducted to the house of her husband. She was seated on horseback, clothed in white and thickly veiled. Other women followed, also on horseback, who were the friends and companions of the bride, less thickly veiled and less expensively adorned. Tom-toms were incessantly beaten; and one man went before, with his face turned to the bride, and brandishing a sword as if he wished to stop her progress, but always giving way as she advanced. It was hard work, and the poor fellow was perspiring profusely. Water, carried in little phials, was cast in the direction of the bride, and handfuls of corn were flung at her—

acts which we willingly interpreted as expressing the wishes of the people that "her bread might be given her, and her water might be sure." We were reminded, by the handfuls of corn, of the old custom in our own country of breaking an oaten cake over the head of the newly-married wife as she passes her husband's threshold for the first time; and as we thought of this, we got some corn from one of the people—who seemed all in a state of the highest good-nature—and cast it with our benediction at the young bride too. She was received with her escort of young maidens into her husband's house, and the door was immediately closed.

Down near the lowest part of the valley, and about the centre of the town, there is a large gloomy structure having no pretension to architectural beauty of any kind. It is the residence of the Turkish governor and the barracks of the Turkish soldiers. We could not look on it without a shudder, when we remembered how, so lately as 1860, a thousand native Christians had perished there, in those massacres of mingled treachery and cruelty which made Lebanon for a time a name of horror to the whole civilized world. Whatever political causes may have been at work in producing this and similar tragedies among those mountains, it is beyond question that the principal cause was the Mohammedan hatred of Christians. The Maronite Christians nominally belong to the Roman Catholic Church; though they have a patriarch of their own, and show, both in their doctrine and practice, a considerable independence of Papal rule. They are for the most part an agricultural people, and, though by far the most numerous people on the Lebanon, their tastes and habits are not warlike. The Druses, again, are a fanatical sect, mingling in their religion a lax Mohammedanism with rites and mystic practices inherited from the old heathenism. They cherish a turbulent independence and an ostentatious hospitality which is not always unselfish. They are universally soldiers, and have little compunction in committing deeds of

rapine and murder. They regard the Maronites with a fanatical hatred that is only held back from bloodshed by the dread of an authority which may exact a double vengeance, but which in certain junctures has winked at their atrocities. These were the ruthless agents who sought the entire destruction not only of the Maronites, but of every Christian, Greek or Protestant, in Hasbeĭya—a tragedy of crime in which, if the Turkish powers were not themselves the prompters, they had at all events a most guilty complicity. The poor Maronites, worsted by their persecutors, fled to the palace and sought the protection of the governor. This was solemnly promised in writing, on condition of their remaining within the walls of the citadel and laying down their arms. When this was done, and the too confiding victims were weakened by days and nights of hunger and thirst, the Druses were let loose upon them, and the gates closed, and Christians, to the number of a thousand, hacked in pieces by axes and other rude instruments that prolonged and doubled the terrors of death.

There were some who escaped the wholesale carnage, and among these was the native Protestant missionary at Hasbeĭya; but his son, a noble youth, perished. A Druse lady who had received some kindness from the missionary warned him, at the eleventh hour, of his danger, and kept him in a quiet hiding-place until "those sad calamities were overpast." The amiable evangelist visited us in our tent after sunset, bringing with him as his interpreter his only daughter (who had been taught English at Beyrout), and a number of the children of his school. The shadow of that day of cruelty still rested on the countenance of the old man, and will never leave it until he passes into the light of heaven. We admired the simplicity of his faith and the love of his spirit. The bright-eyed Arab girls from his school were introduced into our tent, and sang beautifully in Arabic a number of juvenile hymns translated from our own language; concluding, to our surprise and delight, with singing,

to one of our own tunes, and in well-pronounced English, "There is a happy land, far, far away." Was it not such children as these, of the same colour and contour, that sang hosannas long ago to the Son of David?

We cannot forget that at Hasbeîya we are not far from the Syrian source of the Jordan. Pass down the narrow valley, and in less than half an hour you come upon the Hasbany branch of the sacred river; then go up its current a little way, and you are standing at its spring. It gurgles forth with some force from the midst of reeds and rushes, and becomes a basin of purest water. Soon after, it overleaps a dam, and forms a beautiful waterfall. At a short distance it is spanned by its first bridge. Fish are plentiful in it near its source. For the first five miles the young river winds through a narrow, cultivated valley, though it is only seen at intervals, being for the most part densely shaded by willows, sycamores, and terebinths, which intermingle their branches from the opposite banks. A deep cleft of basaltic rock next opens, which seems to form the beginning of the tremendous gorge that extends through the whole length of Palestine to the Dead Sea. In this the Jordan finds its channel, and flowing by a series of gradual descents, and creeping at times through sedgy morasses, in which it is joined by the other branches, it reaches the Lake of Huleh, twenty-five miles from its Hasbany source. Let us follow it onward in thought to its end.

Its depression below the level of the Mediterranean as it flows out from the "waters of Merom" is eighteen and a half feet, and the depression increases at an extraordinary rate between this point of exit and the Lake of Galilee. It traverses a distance of little more than nine miles, yet, by the time it reaches the latter lake, it has sunk more than six hundred feet. At some places its movement is sluggish, and occasional ruined mill-courses have been observed on its banks; but more frequently it speeds onward with tremendous rapidity

through deep narrow crevices over which the oleander thickens, concealing the watery horrors beneath. The effect of all this fretting and foaming is seen when the river, winding past the ruins of Bethsaida-Julias, flows at length with muddy current into the sunny Lake of Galilee.

Emerging with pure waters from the southern extremity of the lake, the old river soon begins to have a very troubled time of it, and those unique characteristics appear which distinguish it from all the other rivers of the Old World. These especially consist in the number of its rapids and cascades, in its singularly tortuous current, and in the deep depression of its channel. Though there is many a point of tranquil beauty in its progress, it abounds in rapids and cataracts. Lieutenant Lynch mentions one hundred and twenty of more or less magnitude; sometimes, indeed, as we have ourselves observed, the river is for more than a hundred yards one foaming rapid. The distance between the Lake of Galilee and the Dead Sea, measured by the crow's flight, is not much more than sixty miles; measured by its windings, the river traverses between the two lakes more than two hundred miles, as if, according to the beautiful fancy of Pliny, it shrunk from mingling its pure waters with the Sea of Death. Its average fall per mile is eleven and a half feet, so that by the time that it has found its way to the Dead Sea, through the deepest and hottest crevice in the world, it has sunk one thousand three hundred and sixteen feet below the level of the Mediterranean.

We suspect that facts like these, which have only become known in our own times through the explorations of Lieutenants Molyneux and Lynch, produce a sense of disappointment in many minds, and rudely dissipate some pleasant dreams. For the deep depression of the river below the general level of the country unfits it, except in a very limited degree, for purposes of irrigation; its rapids and cataracts utterly disqualify it for internal commerce; and having no communication with the

Mediterranean, it is quite as useless as a means of intercourse with other lands. But there is much force in the suggestion that, if we go back to the period of the Jewish theocracy, we shall find the mystery explained, and shall discover the uses for which Providence designed these physical peculiarities of the Jordan. It served the purposes of isolation and defence at the period when Israel had its great mission to discharge, and when it was necessary that it should "dwell alone." And it is worthy of notice that it was deepest and most impassable at the time of harvest, when the wealth of the land and the food of the people were most exposed. The deep river, with its lofty mounds on either side, was a better defence from heathen hordes coming from the east than a mountain-wall. A thousand times it must have helped to discourage and drive back the invaders.

We left Hasbeîya in the morning, amid rain and thunder which seemed to threaten us with slippery paths during the day, and with damp tents at night. But, as often happens in life, we fed by anticipation on sorrows that never came. It soon brightened into a cloudless day, revealing to us the characteristic features of this mountain region, which repeated themselves upon us without weariness. There were mountain-villages far up among the pines, whose white houses appeared in the distance to be diminished to the size of shells upon the sea-shore. Other villages seemed to cling to the rocky mountain-sides like the nests of swallows; while here and there, in some protected nook, or cresting some commanding eminence, there was the convent of some religious order, or the castle of some old robber chief, who continued to wield over the surrounding region a rough and rudely-defined feudal power. We were delighted with the position of Rasheia, which was our next halting-place. It stands at the foot of Hermon, on the northern side, opposite to that which is visible from Cesarea Philippi. The ample dews descending from the mountain make the vineyards and

orchards appear as if they had received a double blessing. One cloud fell upon the picture, when we thought that up in yon citadel on the brow of the hill, the slaughter-weapons of the frenzied Druses had done their bloody work as ruthlessly as at Hasbeĭya.

We had unpleasant experience, on the following night, of the violent changes of temperature which are not uncommon in this part of Syria. All night we were unable to sleep because of the cold. Even when we left our tent in the morning, the thermometer had only risen to 38°; and yet, ere we had proceeded many hours on our journey, it had gone up to 100°. We were reminded of Jacob's complaint to his selfish father-in-law, that in "the day the drought consumed him, and the frost by night." Our journey this day was all the distance to Damascus, and it occupied us nearly ten fatiguing hours. During the earlier part of the day we passed through an agricultural region in which Saul of Tarsus, travelling perhaps by the same road, may have seen the very picture which we chanced to see, and to which proverbial allusion was made in his memorable vision —an ox in the plough urged on by the ploughman's goad, and wounding himself worse by impatiently kicking against the pricks. If Paul had beheld a similar sight, the proverbial saying must have been to him like a flash of Omniscience. But as we advanced the way became almost desert, and the heat of the fierce sun, especially as reflected from our sandy path, became almost intolerable. Through a double-lined umbrella, and a turban with many thick folds, its terrible rays pierced, heating our blood and fevering our brain. How dazzling must have been the light of Saul's mid-day vision, when it exceeded the radiance of such a sun!

It was an unspeakable relief to our half-blinded eyes, and a most welcome refreshment to our spirits, when Damascus at length rose up before us as we journeyed, like a beautiful dream. We could not indeed see it in detail, but the partial

veil perhaps heightened the impression. There it stood, about an hour distant, embosomed in the midst of trees of every name, and watered by innumerable streams, its hundreds of graceful spires and tall airy minarets rising in the midst of a sea of green. Thirty miles of gardens circle it round about. Its singularly pure atmosphere and the deep blue sky bending over it greatly enhance its beauty, and almost make you believe that Nature must have looked thus before the Fall. We do not wonder at the saying which has been ascribed to Mohammed when, gazing down on its loveliness from near the heights of Salahîyeh, he turned away from it at length, saying, "Man can have but one paradise, and mine is fixed above." The poets of the East kindle into glowing enthusiasm as they write of it: "Thou art fresh as the breath of spring, blooming as thine own rose-bud, and fragrant as thine own orange-flower, O Damascus, pearl of the East."

It would have been unnatural, too, not to feel the attraction of a city which is literally as old as history itself, the oldest great city in the world; and which stands prominent in the narratives and allusions of the Bible from its earliest to its latest page. It was already a place of note in Abraham's time, when he obtained from it his faithful steward, Eliezer. Josephus tells us that it was built by Uz, a grandson of Noah; in which case its foundations must have been laid soon after the first dispersion from the great centre of Ararat. And it was a city of name and power when Saul of Tarsus was arrested by the heavenly vision on the road near to it; an event which, next to the great Pentecost itself, was the most important in the first Christian age. Almost all the great powers of the world have held sway in it by turns—the Babylonian, the Persian, the Grecian, the Roman, and the Saracen. Twice it has been the centre of a dominion that stretched its arms over three quarters of the globe; and for ages it was the capital of the Mohammedan faith. Its existence has been justly described as a political

and geographical necessity. It is the phœnix of great cities, ever rising fresh and young again from the ashes of its desolations. And at this hour, with its nearly 200,000 inhabitants, it holds the unique position of being the point of junction between the East and the West; or, as an old historian styled it some centuries ago, "It is the golden clasp which couples the two sides of the world together." Our party had quarrelled with the dragoman, because he had brought us by a different road from that by which he knew we had wished to enter, and we galloped away from him in anger, determined to find out the one hotel in the city for ourselves. The irritation was reasonable, but this manner of expressing it soon proved to be very inconvenient. Riding through the gorgeous suburban gardens, where groups of men were sitting among the flowers, or lounging dreamily beside the sparkling streams, we entered the city by the noble gate through which the pilgrims annually pass on their way to Mecca. But where, in that confusing labyrinth of roads and lanes, was the one hotel for the Franks? and from whom in that babel of many tongues, not a word of which we could understand, were we to get the needed information? One after another of our party dismounted, and accosting some of the passers-by with an inquiring look, named the place,—"Hotel Dimitri"—"Hotel Dimitri;" but the question was only met again and again with a vacant and half-offended stare. This went on for about half an hour; and under the hot sun and on the dusty roads, it was vexatious enough. Happening to notice a little maiden with a donkey for hire, we suggested that by hiring her donkey and naming the place we should probably find a cheap and easy guide; but our proposal was disdained: on which we reminded our friends that there was once in this same city long ago a little Hebrew maid that had helped a proud Syrian to a cure, and that perhaps this little Damascene girl, if encouraged, might have helped us to our hotel. The lass with her donkey still kept near us; but it

required twenty minutes more of fatigue and dust before our friends would stoop to engage her. "Hotel Dimitri," was once more the word, and in less than three minutes the nimble damsel had us at the hotel gate. Its ponderous leaves were immediately thrown open at our knocking, and, dust-laden, fretted, and wearied, we passed into the midst of a scene that was truly Oriental, as it was greatly welcome. The apartments of the large hotel were built around an inner court which was paved with marble and open to the sky, in the centre of which there was a spacious sheet of water, into which little fountains constantly discharged themselves, and over which citron, lemon, and orange trees laden with yellow fruit, bent gracefully, and mirrored themselves in it. Flowers of rare beauty grew in immense wooden pots in other parts of the court and up against the frescoed walls, and these were continually refreshed by spray from lesser fountains. Our very sleeping apartment, which opened from the central court, had fountains in it, whose soft music, at a later hour in the evening, lulled us to sleep. All this was, in fact, supplied from the river Abana, whose streams are carried everywhere throughout the city in rapid water-courses or in tiny rills. It is the good genius of Damascus, doing for it what the Nile does for Egypt: irrigating its gardens, driving its mills, supplying its baths, rushing through its private houses, and serving every culinary and sanitary purpose, and saving the city from becoming like the desert that approaches to its very gates. One is almost tempted to think that the Psalmist must have had his eye on this picture when he said,—"There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God."

The following day was the Sabbath, the greater part of which was spent by us in the devout society of the Irish and American Protestant missionaries. We were particularly interested by a large class for young men which was conducted by one of the missionary brethren. They read along with him in Arabic,

and were examined on the ninth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. The intelligence and promptitude of their answers surprised us. The name of God was never mentioned by them without some adoring epithet,—such as "God, Most High." We were struck with the look of elevation and awakened thought which Christian education always gives to the countenance of a convert, as compared with those who continue slumbering in their old darkness and error. The missionaries told us that, in digging for a solid foundation for their church and schools, they were obliged to go down at least thirty feet below the surface, passing through the ruins of old buildings, broken cisterns, empty water-courses, and graves with bones in them. And it is the same through all Damascus. It was not without emotion that these admirable men pointed us to a spot where two ways met, which was the place where their brother Mr. Graham was massacred in the dreadful scenes of 1860. And our conceptions of the dreadful range of that whirlwind of Moslem fanaticism and fury were greatly increased, when we went with them to the Christian quarter of the city and observed that nearly the whole extent of it was still a calcined heap of ruins. The missionaries and their disciples are by no means confident of safety even yet. There is an intensity of intolerance and bigotry among the Mohammedans of this city, which keeps them like some inflammable matter which the slightest spark may kindle anew into a desolating flame. Not many months before our visit, when the war was raging in Crete, in which many Turks suffered, a hand-bill was posted on all the public places in Damascus, representing what great cruelties their fellow-religionists were suffering from the Christians. It was at once understood as a summons to "the faithful" to proceed to a second massacre. Sabres were sharpened, and weapons were purchased in great numbers from the armour-shops. The missionaries told us that they had set about providing the means of defence for themselves and their children, determined

that they would sell their lives dear. The mischievous hand-bill was traced to the chief secretary of the Pasha. It was only at the last moment that the rising tide of Moslem vengeance was checked by a counter-mandate from the Pasha himself. No doubt this peculiar intensity of hatred, which distinguishes the followers of the false prophet in Damascus, is in part to be explained by its distance from those moderating European influences which operate so much more powerfully at Constantinople, and even at Beyrout. But beyond this, it is to be remembered that the proudest periods in the history of this ancient city stand connected with Mohammedan conquest and supremacy. And more than this, it is the principal centre from which the Moslem pilgrims depart on their annual pilgrimage to the shrine of their prophet at Mecca, passing in myriads through what is grandly styled the "Gate of God;" and the governor of Damascus finds his most coveted honour and his richest source of revenue in having the safe conduct of the immense sacred cavalcade committed to his care.

We took an early opportunity, on subsequent days, of visiting the principal scenes of Biblical and Christian interest in Damascus. A lepers' hospital was pointed out to us as very fitly covering the spot where had once stood the house of Naaman the Syrian. At different places we observed houses built on the very walls of the city; and in one of these an overhanging window, from which it was not difficult to imagine that Paul might long ago have been let down in a basket, and, escaping by night into the open country, have eluded the pursuit of his persecutors. Of course, we did not fail to walk from end to end of the "street called Straight," nearly a mile in length, and ever memorable as locally associated with the spiritual birth-hour of the greatest of the apostles. We were surprised, as we looked around us, at the unduly depreciatory terms in which this ancient street has been spoken of by some travellers. Could it be reproduced in its original form by an architect,

taking advantage of the signs which remain even as a skilful artist has sometimes restored an ancient picture, it would be seen to have been one of the most splendid streets in this great city of the East. There was a spacious centre path for chariots and other vehicles. Separated from this by two long lines of marble colonnades, there were two narrow side-paths for foot passengers, fragments of the beautiful columns being still visible in many places; while a noble gate, with three corresponding openings, terminates the street at either extremity. There seems to be a fair probability that this is the actual "street called Straight" which is immortalized in the evangelical history; and if so, the rank of Judas, with whom the apostle spent his three days and nights of blindness, must have been a good deal higher than is generally supposed. We could imagine the stricken man led blind, wondering and awe-struck, into the house of his friend—the secret visit of Ananias—the unsealed vision, and the baptism with water, associated with the simultaneous baptism of the Spirit from heaven.

We visited one of the courts of justice, and found its business conducted with not a little decorum and dignity. The kadi, or judge, seated on an elevated dais, invited us to come up and sit near him—an honour which we declined with the same elaborate politeness with which it had been offered. A number of secretaries sat on either side of a low cushioned table in front of the tribunal, at the furthest end of which the persons who were engaged in the law-suit pleaded their own cause. It appeared to involve a question about the meaning of a written contract, which the kadi was examining with much gravity while they were speaking. The parties spoke with remarkable fluency; and in their impassioned earnestness sometimes planted one of their naked feet upon the cushion before them. We noticed that, both on their entering and retiring, they washed their hands in a fountain which stood at the extremity of the hall

of justice. It would have been well, on every account, had they extended the ablutions to their feet.

The next scene witnessed by us was one of the most distressing that we met with in Damascus, or the East. It was an actual slave-market. The Turkish Government, in its correspondence with the great Western powers, finds it convenient to disavow all complicity with slavery; but it not only exists, but is connived at by the local authorities in Damascus. There is not a week in which women are not bought and sold here for the basest of all purposes. Guided by two of our missionary friends, we went to the place in which this foul traffic was said to be carried on, in order that we might see with our own eyes. At the foot of a stair, we inquired of a man who was guarding the entrance, whether slaves were sold here. Seeing us to be Franks, he denied with the most violent asseverations. As "the fellow" seemed to us to "protest too much," we ventured, while he was engaged in altercation with our friends, to ascend the stair, and in a small apartment at the head of it we found seven young women huddled together on the floor. A little tambourine and some other simple instruments of music lay around them. The slave dealer, almost immediately after made his appearance; and not the least ashamed of his falsehood, though he saw himself to be found out, asked us to name our price for one of the seven. We confess to having felt a strong inclination to seize a whip which hung in the apartment and to thrash the scoundrel with it.

It was a great relief to pass away from this saddening picture and to wander at will among the numerous bazaars of this truly Oriental city. They appeared to us to be greatly more rich and varied even than those of Cairo. The products of the East and the West met here in equal abundance: silk cloth from the looms of Bagdad, perfumes from the gardens of Persia, spices from the banks of the Indus, with calicoes from Manchester, lamps from Birmingham, and knives from Sheffield. No place

more interested us than the immense workshop and bazaar of the silversmiths, in which hundreds of men and boys were busily engaged in preparing the most delicate ornaments of gold and silver, or in setting costly gems and jewels; and as you stood, a thing of beauty came forth from the cunning hands of the artist. A violent quarrel took place between two of the workmen while we were looking on. Immediately the younger of the two, furious with rage, seized one of the sharpest instruments, and rushed forward to plunge it in the neck of his adversary. His hand was arrested by two other workmen from behind, just as it was descending with the fatal blow.—Next we drove to the gardens around the city, in which the rose of Damascus and many other flowers were in all their loveliness, and the trees seemed to have retained much of the verdure and vigour of Eden. And when the sun was gone down, and the coloured lamps were lighted among the trees, and picturesque groups, in strangely varied costume, sat in front of the *cafés*, or by the banks of the streams, or near to little cascades, sipping their coffee or smoking their graceful nerghilés, it seemed as if an enchanter's wand had suddenly conjured up some of the scenes in the old "Arabian Nights."

Our last visit in Damascus was paid to one of its native merchant-princes, who also held the office of consul to one of the states of Europe. We knew him to be a Protestant Christian of great learning, and we wished both to enjoy a few minutes of Christian intercourse with him, and to witness something of the domestic life and style of the higher society in Damascus. The approach to his house was by a long unpaved dusty lane between high mud-walls. But how different was the spectacle when a very unpretentious door in the wall was opened, and we entered! We were first conducted into a spacious central court, all laid with the finest marble, where *jets d'eau* played and sparkled in the sunlight, dropping freshness on flowers of every form and colour. and making the air

cool and balmy. Thin marble pillars supported a verandah which went round the whole inner court, and lovely creeping plants entwined themselves round or hung gracefully from their capitals. We were next guided by a dark-visaged attendant into a splendid apartment, in which the frescoed walls shone with the gayest colours of the painter, and a dais of crimson silk encircled the whole. Rich coffee was presented to us in diminutive cups; after which the great man, with majestic forehead and snowy beard, entered. We found him full of intelligence, discussing the Pope's claim to infallibility with much acuteness and originality, and with sentences of most reviving pungency. His last words to us were, "Pray for us, brother; we Christians here sit on a barrel of gunpowder."

It was not without some regret that, on the afternoon of April 20, we left Damascus, taking our last look of it from the commanding height down which the Barrady pours its life-giving waters into the plain. There seems no sufficient reason for doubting that this is the Abana of Naaman the Syrian; though it is yet an unsettled question whether the Pharphar which shared the admiration of the great Syrian chief, was one of the tributaries of the Abana, or a branch which was separated from the Abana in order to water the wide extent of the ancient "Ager Damascenûs." The beneficent influence of the river, as we rode along its banks on that sunny afternoon, was very noticeable. Wherever its waters could be carried by irrigation, everything flourished, "like the garden of the Lord;" beyond its reach, parched nature seemed to hold out signals of distress. Such as Abana was to these regions, should the Church of Christ be to the world.

The most remarkable object in this afternoon's ride was the fountain of Fidji, which bursts forth with impetuous force from a rock, and at once becomes a river thirty-six feet broad. It is one of the natural wonders of Western Asia.

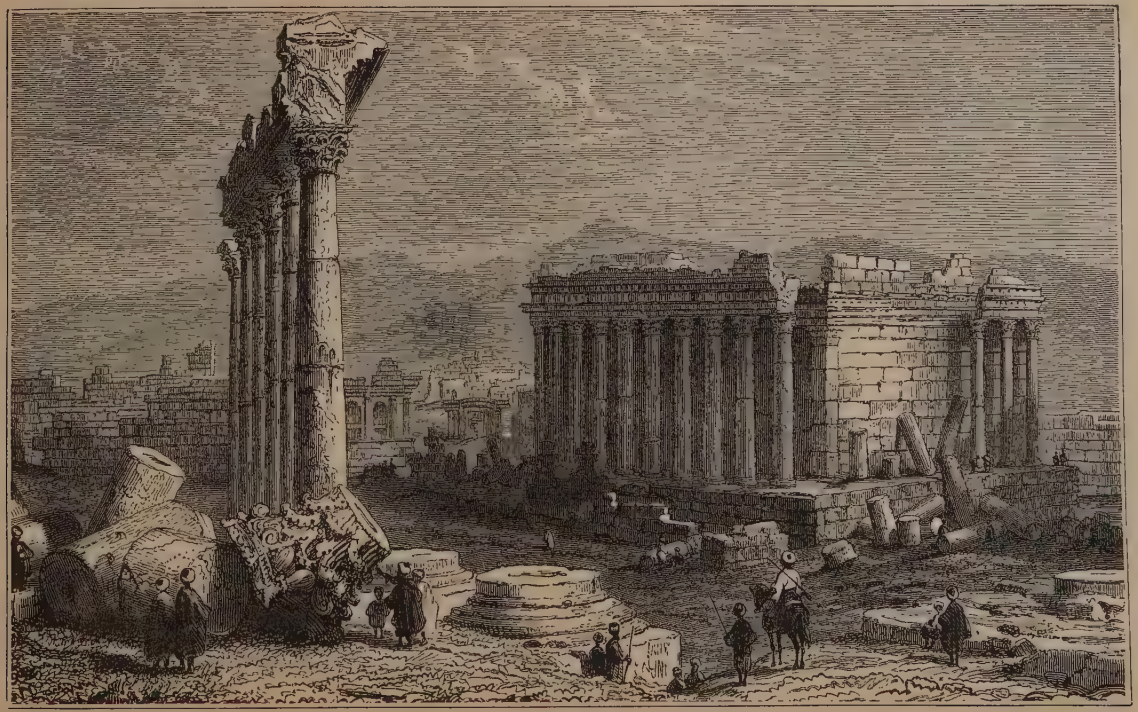
During the following day our course was, for the most part,

in the midst of magnificent rock-scenery hemming us in on either side, and whose fantastic shapes filled us with astonishment. At times a lordly eagle would come forth from some unapproachable crag far above us, and sail grandly up into the sky. Our sure-footed horses were often wading with us in the bed of deep streams, but the wise creatures seemed to set down their feet with caution. There were times, however, in which we came out upon a more open country, in which the quince, the apricot, the hawthorn, and other trees, were in rich blossom, and our impressions of the great natural fertility of Lebanon were deepened. We took our mid-day meal this day beside an ancient khan of considerable dimensions, which offered us the protection of its naked walls and the benefits of a cistern whose waters stood in much need of filtration. We preferred sitting on our little rugs on the green grass outside. Suddenly, as if they had started out of the earth, a company of wandering gipsies came up to us. As usual, they had a donkey for their "servant-of-all-work." A tambourine was beaten by a beautiful girl on whom the sun had looked; while a lad performed a dance with marvellous agility, in parts of which the girl joined, still keeping time with her instrument. It was curious to meet with these ubiquitous wanderers in a remote region of Lebanon.

On the morning of April 22, we were scouring over the broad plain of the Baka'a, which stretches between the two great mountain-ranges, and near to the springs of the grandly impetuous Leontes; and early in the afternoon, our tents were pitched in the midst of the magnificent ruins of Baalbec. We are not about to attempt a description of this city of ruined temples, almost rivalling those of Athens in elegance of design and execution, and scarcely falling short of those of Egypt itself in vastness. It is the work of photography to do what the pen cannot do. Three temples—those of Jupiter and the Sun, and one of lesser magnitude, but of most minute and

exquisite finish—keep you standing before them in turns in silent wonder. It may help to give some faint idea of the extent of space covered by the entire series of structures, to mention that our eight tents, with horses and mules, found ample accommodation in one of its many courts; and that another large party of travellers had been encamped for several hours in another part of the ruins, before we became aware of their presence. What was the design of this extraordinary congregation of idol temples? Was it to be a Pantheon—a place for all the gods? Or, more probably, was it intended to be the metropolis of sun-worship?—to be to Baal what the Temple of Jerusalem, under Judaism, was to the only living and true God? Those three enormous hewn stones which form part of the outer wall of the so-called Temple of Jupiter, remain an unsolved problem to archæologists. Through the midst of tall rank grass—in which long yellow snakes abounded, but glided away as we approached—we found our way to that part of the wall. Three stones, each of an average length of sixty-five feet, and of proportionate height and breadth, extend in line along the wall, not forming by any means the lowest stones. in the Titanic structure. Tell us, ye men of science! by what mechanical powers these stones were brought from their quarry a mile distant; and still more we wish to know by what forces they were raised to their position, and fitted to each other with a skill which no modern masonry can exceed. Have we not here an instance of a lost art? When idolaters have expended such incredible wealth and architectural genius on blind homage to their false gods, is there any munificence on the part of Christians too great in seeking to rear a temple of living stones to the glory of Him to whom we owe alike our creation and our redemption?

As we rode along the Baka'a plain on the following day, there was one dark object, far up in the midst of the dazzling snow, which appeared in the distance no bigger than a man's



RUINS OF BAALBEC.

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hand, but which we knew to be in fact the famous "cedar saints," or cedars of Lebanon. They stand 6500 feet above the level of the sea, and at this season of the year are surrounded by many miles of snow six or seven feet deep, so that they could only have been approached by us with much labour and danger; if, indeed, they could have been reached at all. It is a mistake to suppose that those twelve patriarchs, with their younger congeners around them, are the only cedars now to be found anywhere on Lebanon. Their peculiar attraction consists in the fact that they bear in their astonishing girth and fantastic branches indubitable evidence of an extraordinary age. They measure nearly forty feet around the thickest part of their stem; and it is far from unlikely that these very "cedars of God" were standing, young and full of sap, when Hiram, king of Tyre, at the instance of David and Solomon, was felling near them older trees for the building of the Temple of the Lord at Jerusalem. Noble emblem these of the righteous man firmly rooted in the Rock of Ages, withstanding the shock of many a tempest of affliction, and while spreading his hand and his heart to catch heaven's dew and sunshine, affording shelter and blessing to those who seek his protection. We recollect that Lord Lindsay mentions, that when he entered those cedar groves he found them perfumed and pungent with their odours. This was "the smell of Lebanon." It seems to us that much of the wealth and prosperity that are surely coming upon Lebanon, will stand connected with the protection and culture of her trees. Not only are there here many pine-forests, ascending in many places to the snow-line. But, first of all in importance and value, there is the mulberry-tree, which feeds the silk-worm that enriches Beyrout and many a mountain-village near it. Next, there is the Lebanon vine, creeping up the sunny hill-sides, and supplying raisins for many of the fruit-markets of Europe, and glutting many a wine-press, and wakening many a vintage song. There are also olive groves, already

twenty miles in extent—and it only needs a fair amount of skill and enterprise to make the manufacture of olive-oil one of the most productive industries of Syria; while fruit trees of almost every name find a congenial soil and a fit exposure in many parts of those grand mountains, or their intervening valleys.

At length we had come up to the excellent French road which now so usefully connects Damascus with Beyrout. As we travelled pleasantly along it, and met with the wheeled vehicle and even the lumbering "diligence," we felt that we were again coming into intercourse with civilization. We stumbled at times also upon the course of the electric telegraph. There was something oddly picturesque in seeing it, now and then, attached to the stem of an aged palm-tree that was casting its welcome shadow on the road-side. As we approached within a few miles of Beyrout, we found every inch of land under energetic culture, and a rich beauty spreading itself out before us on every side. There was a magnificent valley down into which we looked from our lofty pathway, and whose sides were cultivated and planted down to the very edge of an empty channel which, in winter, carries down the waters of a strong mountain-torrent to the sea. We were gradually passing from cultured farms into the midst of blossoming orchards and mulberry groves. The barren rocks were now all behind us. Village after village peeped out from the midst of trees of richest green; and these were no mere collection of mud-huts, but built with taste, and in many instances with elegance. See! those are the suburban mansions and gardens of the European merchants; and beyond them is Beyrout, stretching out in triangular form, into that noble St. George's Bay, with its little fleet of ships and smoking steamers, and resting with its base upon the roots of Lebanon. That is by far the most prosperous city in all Syria. It is the point at which Europe and Asia have shaken hands and exchanged benedictions. In its grow-

ing commerce and its educational institutions—which it owes mainly to England and America—we have both the secret and the spring of its own expanding prosperity, and the prepared agencies which are soon to make all Syria its debtor. We visited the Syrian Protestant College, with its seventy-five students, and its admirable staff of professors—classical and scientific, medical and theological—in whose system, while religion is present everywhere, it is forced upon no one. We saw at work the printing-press of Dr. Van Dyck, at which he was printing his own standard translation of the Scriptures into the Arabic tongue, and multiplying the bread of life so as to feed hundreds of thousands. We spent hours with Dr. Bastani, the most learned native of Syria; and we saw him busy with the third volume of his great Arabic Dictionary. We were present in the devoted Miss Taylor's humble school, in which the very poorest of Moslem girls receive the elements of a sound education, and are trained to repeat portions of the Word of God. And in the school of Mrs. Bowen Thompson—who has since been taken up to her reward—we found the children of Jew and Greek, of Maronite and Druse, of Mohammedan and Protestant Christian, gathered in hundreds around that woman of quiet energy, of deep wisdom, and unquenchable faith; while the lame and the blind, whom no man had cared for, felt the touch of her beneficence. We conversed with her about her schools in the towns and mountain-villages all over the Lebanon, then thirteen in number, and increasing every year—the latest application for the opening of a Christian school having come from a village beyond the Lebanon, in the far-off mountains of the Hauran. The Free Church mission in these mountains has also received a mighty impulse since our visit. And all these agencies convince us that God has put into the hands of Beyrout the highest destinies of Syria. She holds in trust the leaven that is to leaven the whole lump. Still you may hear from many a minaret in Beyrout, at sunset, the

muezzin-cry, which tells you that you are in a Mohammedan city. But the Christian element is becoming stronger and spreading wider in this old "Berytus" every year. The Christian missionaries and teachers are here. The Christian literature is here, and much of the Christian wealth is here also, which God is about to use for the regeneration of Lebanon. And Beyrout will in a few years do for Syria what America and England have been doing for her. "There shall be an handful of corn in the earth upon the top of the mountains; the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon: *and they of the city shall flourish like grass of the earth.*

XVIII.

Footprints of the Apostles.

St. George's Bay—Sunset on Lebanon—The last look—Out in the darkness—Off Cyprus—Larneca—Scottish hospitality—English comforts—Classical associations—Introduction of Christianity—Paul and Barnabas—Sergius Paulus—Elymas the sorcerer—Tomb of Lazarus—A Greek monk—Golden age of Cyprus—Departure—Fellow-passengers—Rhodes from the sea—The Colossus—Cos—Samos—Patmos—Apocalypse of John—Chios—The Bay of Smyrna—Picture—Landing—Wanderings—The Caravan-bridge—Institution of Prussian deaconesses—Tomb of Polycarp—Story of his martyrdom—Journey to Ephesus—Brigands—Paul at Ephesus—Mosque of St. John—Council of Ephesus—Mount Prion—Ancient forum—Market-place—Odeon—Stadium—Paul's Theatre—Ephesus, past and present—Return to Smyrna—Evening sermon in the ship—Ephesus of the future.

IT is among the last days of April, and we are on board the *Vesta* in St. George's Bay, at Beyrout, and we are about to sail up the Levant and amid the isles of the Ægean for Constantinople. Our interest, kept alive by previous months of travel in Palestine and Syria, now anticipates scenes made sacred by the toils and the triumphs of apostles, and attractive by the fact that for many ages they had been the most active centres of the older civilization.

It is near sunset—so near, that in a few minutes the muezzin-cry will be sounding from many a minaret in Beyrout, calling the Moslem to prayer; and sunset beheld from St. George's Bay, upon the lively Syrian sea-port, and upon the Lebanon, which forms its majestic background, is a spectacle never to be forgotten. How those tall and golden-tipped minarets sparkle in the slanting light! How it brings out in strange distinctness those groups of mulberry and fig trees far up upon the sides of

Lebanon, and beautifies other spots with a luminous haze. The many peaks of the mountain are yet bathed in glory, but the shadows are already falling on its base, and veiling its inner recesses. So rapid are the changes of aspect produced by the descending luminary, that, in a quarter of an hour, you appear to have looked upon a succession of scenes rather than upon one.

More than one of our poets has noticed that we uniformly look with sadness upon some grand or sacred object that we know we are beholding for the last time; and we understood this when we turned to take a last gaze on "sainted Lebanon," over which the darkness was already drawing its cloud-curtain. But another feeling rose as we saw the dim lights of the city which lay at its feet; for Beyrout is the centre of Christian and educational influence for Syria and all the north of Palestine. It is one great link between Western activity and Eastern apathy; and already, in its ever-growing European population, it is vigorously fulfilling its mission.

We are sailing out into the darkness; for there are no light-houses visible, and the pilot's only human helps are the compass and the stars. But it is a tranquil sea; and early next morning we are surprised by the welcome announcement that we are lying off the island of Cyprus.

It is the town of Larneca that is before us, the little seaport of the island, looking beautiful in the morning light, with its white houses lining the shore, the gardens and summer-houses of its merchants behind, and its remoter background of hills—Monte Crocè, the Cyprian Olympus, rising sixteen miles distant, the unquestioned monarch of the rest.

Having snatched a rapid breakfast, we were borne on shore in the comfortable boat of the English consul, to whom we had a letter of introduction; and in a little time we were enjoying, along with the consul, the cordial hospitality of a Scottish merchant's family. The entrance to our friend's house was

lined with ancient sculptures and relics of every form—heads of Ceres, limbs of Apollo, stone lamps, marble urns, alabaster vessels for ointment, iridescent bottles, votive altars—everything to make the eyes of an archæologist sparkle. It was pleasing, after so many weeks of incessant wandering and tent life, greatly enjoyed by us at the time, to find ourselves in the midst of home comforts and refinements, and to discover on our friend's table some of the best literature, and many of the latest serials fresh from England. And our heart was all the more drawn out to him when we learned that while there was no Protestant place of worship in all Cyprus, the apartment in which we then were was turned, on the first day of every week, into a little sanctuary, in which a few disciples, seeking to keep the lamp of their faith burning, met for the reading aloud of the Scriptures, and of some of the best modern sermons, and for social prayer.

It was not, however, until we were seated with our friend on the shore, and enjoying the shade of a neighbouring palm-tree, that we were able to realize the peculiar associations, both classical and Christian, that cluster around Cyprus. The speculations of Clarke, and of much older travellers, favour the conclusion that this Larneca has risen from the ancient Citium; and Josephus relates, in his "Jewish Antiquities," that the founding of this city and the first possession of the island were the work of Ceth, or Chetim, the great-grandson of Noah, from whom both the city and the island derived their earliest name. Chittim, we know, was the oldest Hebrew name for the isles of the Gentiles, and for maritime cities generally; and it is in harmony with one of the most familiar laws of language to suppose this gradually generic use of the designation to have had its beginning here. One thing, at all events, is certain, and it proves the very early period in the world's history in which Cyprus was peopled, that the names of many of its ancient cities, whose sites had already become unknown, were familiar

in the days of Pliny; and there are innumerable traces of the presence in the island of the Phenicians, the earliest of all colonists. Indeed, this large and fertile island, standing as it did not far from either the Asiatic or the European shore, was a natural centre of intercourse between the East and the West; and it is easy to understand, when noticing its geographical position, how it should so often have tempted the ambition and the cupidity of conquerors from either quarter of the world. One might even trace the succession of those waves of conquest by spending a few hours, as we did, in the rich museum of the American consul at Larneca, though its treasures are not arranged with the most perfect antiquarian accuracy. In its Phenician, Persian, Macedonian, Grecian, Roman, and Venetian departments we beheld tokens of the dominion of those powers over Cyprus, when a greater number of people dwelt within one of its cities than now inhabit the whole island after it has been blasted for ages by the withering dominion of the Turk.

But the Christian associations connected with Cyprus were to us by far the most attractive. We recognized in it the birthplace of that Barnabas who was the cherished fellow-labourer of Paul, and whose munificence struck the key-note of early Christian liberality; and the island from whose shores many had gone up from its numerous Jewish synagogues to the first Pentecost after the ascension, and, sharing in the fiery baptism, had been among the earliest and most efficient heralds of the new faith. But, beyond this, Cyprus appeared to us to mark a distinct stage of progress in the history of apostolic missions; for, as the German Stier has shown, this was the first country in which Christianity addressed itself directly and formally to idolatrous Gentiles. No doubt, Gentile proselytes had already been gathered in considerable numbers into the Christian fold; some individual idolaters had also been led to turn from their idols; but here, for the first time, the assault was systematically directed and concentrated upon heathenism in one of its ac-

knowledged strongholds. And seated as we then were, and looking forth from Cyprus, we discerned with most impressive distinctness the verisimilitude of the narrative in the Acts of the Apostles. We are far from questioning that when Paul and Barnabas were separated at Antioch to the work of missionaries to the Gentiles, they were supernaturally controlled in the course they took. But this did not supersede the use of their own natural powers, or the working of their own natural affections and preferences. And looking at these influences alone, we should naturally have expected that Cyprus would be the first place to which they would come on their new mission; as we know they did. In bright weather this island is clearly seen from the bay of Antioch: it is the most prominent object that meets the eye when looking westward. Paul must often have seen it, when a youth, from his native shores of Cilicia. It was the native country of Barnabas, in which he had once held no inconsiderable rank, and owned large possessions. Would it not then become the irrepressible desire of his heart, with so definite a commission to preach the gospel to the Gentiles in his hand, to carry it first to his fellow-countrymen, and to publish it among those once familiar mountains and valleys, especially when it lay directly in his sea-path to the West?

And they have scarcely landed on the island and had time to "display their banner," when they are met by a messenger from one who desires to hear from their own lips the "word of the Lord." Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul, or governor of the island, and "a prudent man," invites them into his presence. It had become the fashion with the higher classes among the Romans of that prevalently sceptical age, as we learn from some sarcastic lines of Juvenal, to have Eastern sorcerers and diviners in attendance on them,—for the rebound is sure from scepticism back to superstition,—and the proconsul had followed this fashion in the person of one Elymas, an Eastern sorcerer. The

half-impostor appears to have had an instinctive impression that if these strangers were once heard by his master, his "occupation would be gone," and therefore he used all his influence and persuasion to prevent the interview. But the Roman, though not yet convinced, was candid and truth-seeking; and the issue was that in Paphos, the citadel of idol-worship in the island, where "lust itself was deified," the "chief man" became a Christian disciple, and the sorcerer was stricken with blindness for a season—the emblem of that mental blindness in which he had sought to keep others.

There are no means of knowing how far the harvest of Christianity in Cyprus corresponded with these first-fruits. But the tradition is that it so prevailed as to become the dominant faith; and that, as one effect of this, the Christians gathered all the idols of the old and dark religions, and cast them into pits which were dug for the purpose. Undeniably such pits filled with heathen relics have been discovered, and fields supposed to contain others have, in more than one instance, been farmed by keen archæologists for the right of excavation. As one of these farmers was our own Christian host, there is no reason to fear that in his case idolatry will be restored with the recovery of the idols.

After finding shelter for a time from the intense glare of the noonday sun, in one of those delightful cafés covered with a thick awning, which project on wooden piles out into the sea, we visited the principal Greek church and the bazaars. It is a curious fact that this is the only island in the Turkish dominions in which churches are allowed the use of bells; the reason of the privilege probably being that while the Turks are the nominal masters, the Greek Christians outnumber them as three to one. The cathedral is a rude old structure, boasting as its chief attraction the tomb of Lazarus. We had expected to find Barnabas the chosen tutelary saint of the place; but on inquiring of the old monk who was our guide, where was the tomb of

Barnabas, he answered in good Greek, "Ten miles across the mountains." The tradition is that Lazarus of Bethany, continuing to be persecuted by the unbelieving Jews because of his resurrection, ultimately sought refuge in this island, and became its first Christian bishop.

The bazaars gave us a poor impression of the trade of Cyprus, their almost sole traffic being in that red leather for which it has an hereditary name. How different from the time when its corn-fields, waving over regions that are now sterile as the sand, fed vast provinces; when its mines of silver and copper supplied enriching exports; when its orchards, with the dimensions of forests, not only loaded with the most luscious fruits the tables of the rich, but diminished the penury of the poor; and when its wines—made of grapes that might have rivalled those of Eshcol—almost equalled in excellence the vintage of Tenedos!—But a signal from our ship warns us to be on deck, and waving many a grateful farewell to our kind Cypriot friends, we are in a few hours beyond the furthest point of Cyprus, and sailing along the shores of the Levant.

We have now time to look at the passengers in our somewhat crowded ship. In the saloon, England and America almost monopolize the accommodation. But when we look over upon the deck-passengers, what a strange medley presents itself! There is a sad, old, white-bearded Jew, seldom rising from his little bit of carpet, with a young Rebecca, probably his grandchild, watching his every movement, and anticipating his every want. There are many Mohammedans punctiliously performing their devotions at the stated hours; while a few Maronites and Druses from the Lebanon, and some soldiers of the Sultan, help to make the groups more picturesque. In one part of the vessel, between the saloon and the side, protected by an awning of canvas from the sun, there are six young women belonging to a pasha who is on board, going to fill up vacant places in his harem at Constantinople. They are inclosed and separated

from the rest of the ship's company, and herd together. Their soulless looks give one the impression that their minds must have ceased to grow after the age of ten or twelve. They are not, however, without their full share of curiosity, as their frequent furtive glances into the saloon make evident. The waters have become a little rough as we have approached the shores of Asia Minor, but it is enough to make the Orientals miserable. A gale is about the last thing in the world that they would wish for. They leave it to the pale-faced men from the West to sing—

"Be thou my chariot, stormy sea."

But by another morning we are lying off Rhodes, not with time enough for a comfortable landing, but with ample opportunity for receiving a general impression of the little capital with its neighbourhood. Several Turkish war-ships are anchored at no great distance from us. The whole appearance of Rhodes produces a greater sense of majesty than did that of Cyprus, and vindicates her old title of "Queen of the Ægean." The town is fortified and surrounded by strong walls, and we can see from our ship the entrance which was once bestrid by that huge Colossus beneath whose legs the most tall-masted ships could sail. Those who have been on shore on a breathless visit confirm the information of Fellowes and other travellers respecting the distinct marks which have been left on Rhodes by the Knights of Jerusalem; though it is now eight hundred years since they were driven from the island, carrying honour and chivalry with them. The arms of England and France are seen sculptured on many an ancient house; and the castle continues in massive strength, under which 16,000 Turks fell, before the knights handed over their iron yet not ungenerous dominion to the Moslem. The little minaretted capital is circled on the land side by an eminence of considerable height, which is crested by windmills and trees, especially by the always

picturesque palm; while, further inland, mountains rise into the clouds to the height of more than four thousand feet. Remembering the old pagan fable, intended to represent its delicious climate and its perfumed breezes, that Jupiter poured down upon this island a golden shower, it was with some regret that we were hurried away from it, and that soon after mid-day we saw it dwindle out of view.

Our course now lay in the midst of islands of every size and shape, some of them rising high in pyramidal and even fantastic forms, and others retaining a comparatively low level; many of them so small that their entire outline could be traced, as if the sea were a map, and those islets the highly-relieved and richly-coloured parts of it. Classical and Christian associations strangely mingle in many of those islands. There, for example, is Cos, the birthplace of Apelles and Pythagoras, so abounding in old heathen altars, that the inhabitants scoop them out for vessels in which to bruise their corn, and in whose little sea-port capital Paul must have spent a night on his third great missionary circuit. And that larger island, which seems like one vast mountain, its summit dark with clouds and nursing the thunder, when all the rest of the Ægean is cloudless and serene, is Samos, where Paul touched, and perhaps preached, on the same eventful voyage; and which is memorable as the birthplace of Hippocrates and the scene of Herodotus' temporary exile, where he wrote some of the books of his delightfully garrulous history. But our highest satisfaction was reserved for the afternoon of that singularly beautiful day; for an hour before sunset there was pointed out to us, beyond the shoulder of another island, the doubly sacred isle of Patmos.

It continues to this day, in its external features, the "asperrima insula" which ancient writers called it. But, to our mind, it shone in that bright sea with all the solemn grandeur of a temple. As the scene of banishment for John the beloved, as the place from which the Heaven-sent messages were communi-

cated by the faithful apostle to the seven Churches on that western seaboard, and where there passed before the seer, in a succession of symbolic visions, the history of the Church of Christ from the ascension down to the winding up of its history at the judgment, what scene approaches it, in the interest of its sacred recollections, out of Palestine? Between what spot of earth and heaven was the intercourse so intimate and continuous? The golden ladder which Jacob saw for one brief night at Bethel, here spanned the distance between the two worlds for many a day and night. As we brought the island nearer to us by means of a good telescope, and saw it in the light of the western sun, we were able to appreciate the description of it by Clarke, as "surrounded by an inexpressible brightness, and seeming to float upon an abyss of fire." Probably the Dean of Westminster has overstrained his ingenuity, in his endeavour to show how much the visions of John took their shape and colouring from the natural scenery and the physical phenomena of this island-prison. But much may be said in support of the general principle on which his speculation proceeds. If we find the descriptions which other inspired men give of the worship of heaven idealized from that of Solomon's Temple, why may we not believe that John's visions were influenced in degree by the scenes of this natural temple of the Ægean? It has been noticed that there was little in the sunrises and sunsets of Ephesus corresponding with the grand pictures of the Apocalypse, but it was otherwise with what John beheld in and around Patmos. As he looked down from one of its summits on the ever-changing sea, he must often have seen it calm as a mirror at his feet, "as a sea of glass like unto crystal;" or when the neighbouring volcanic mountain of Thera sent up its lurid flames, how often must the deep have seemed "like unto a lake of fire!" And again, when its dense smoke darkened the heavens, the sun must have appeared "like sackcloth of hair," and the "moon as blood." Thus far, perhaps, we may safely

go with the accomplished traveller in supposing the natural phenomena in and around this rugged isle to have been reproduced and enlarged in John's symbolic pictures of the spiritual world; and indeed the very circumstance connects the apostle all the more, in common with the narrative part of his Apocalypse, with Patmos.

It is a fact not without its interest, that this island continues to be, to the present day, the Iona of the East. Its monastery, seen from a great distance on one of its loftiest ridges, is a miniature university, to which youths come for the higher forms of instruction, from the Morea, from the shores of Asia Minor, and from many of the neighbouring islands. The sacredness with which the name of the beloved apostle still surrounds it, protects it alike from the exactions of the Turk, and from the robberies of the pirate; just as, in the Middle Ages, the convents were safe when the baron's castle was given up to the flame or the sword. Perhaps its smallness may have something also to do with its independence; and there does seem a mixture of poetry in the description of one traveller which represents liberty as "springing up here, like the flower upon its native mountain."

Before the dawn of the following day we were off Chios, "the isle of wines," over against which Paul had passed a night at anchor, on his return voyage from Troas to Cesarea. We both received and landed goods. Indeed, it was one of our minor enjoyments to observe the commodities that were obtained from the various islands at which we touched; rich fruit and vegetables from one, poultry from another, earthenware of antique shape from a third, and flowers from a fourth. In the early morning we were sailing up the noble bay of Smyrna, skirted on either side by many-shaped mountains covered with woods that were green and beautiful. Before noon we had cast anchor in the midst of war-ships and merchant vessels from many lands, in the wonderfully spacious bay of Smyrna. The

view of this capital of Asia Minor, as obtained from the sea, was grand and imposing. Spreading along the semicircular extremity of the bay, it rises far up the sides of Mount Pagus, minaret and cypress intermingling, — a ruined fortress, its ancient acropolis, with dismantled walls standing out on the summit against a clear sky; while behind all this there is a far-reaching circle of verdant hills. We noticed, with our glass, far up Mount Pagus, a tall solitary cypress bending over some object; and on inquiry, we found that it was the tomb of Polycarp. There is an extraordinary vitality in this city of Smyrna. Ten times it has been destroyed, and as many times it has risen from its ashes. It would not be easy to compute the times in which it has been shattered by the earthquake and more than decimated by the plague; yet there it is, with more than 180,000 inhabitants, rapidly becoming the commercial rival of Constantinople. The chief explanation of all this is to be found in the fact that it is the natural emporium of Eastern commerce by caravans from the East and ships from the West, which ride in safety in one of the most tranquil and spacious bays in the world.

On landing we experienced a good deal of that disenchantment which all must expect on a closer view of an Eastern city; but still we greatly enjoyed Smyrna. Many things that drew our attention, at once told their own story. The flags of so many foreign consulates, on the roofs of spacious houses of semi-European architecture that lined the shore, bore testimony to the importance and magnitude of the commerce of which this city was the centre. And as we passed from the Frank quarter to the interior of the city, which contained the native population, the one-storeyed wooden houses revealed the fact that the people dreaded the earthquake even more than the conflagration. We liked those numerous fountains at the corners of the streets, with their elaborate carvings and Arabic inscriptions, fed by numerous aqueducts that make Smyrna the best-watered city in the East,—the work, it is said, of an early

conqueror, who did what he could to beat his sword into a ploughshare. It was thoroughly Oriental, too, to wander through those crowded bazaars, their half-darkness relieved by the pencil rays of light which came down with such Rembrandt-like effects through occasional interstices in the roof; and to see the grave old merchants squatting in the front of their little shops, their whole stock in trade within easy reach of their outstretched arms. And it was a fine trial of one's patience to be obliged to stand for minutes, while a long procession of camels tied to each other ambled slowly past, arching their long necks, with their noisy drivers "taking no note of time." We remember to have met in one of those narrow streets a most "ragged regiment" which had just returned from the war in Crete, going to be disbanded, and whose members had certainly quite as much the look of bandits as of soldiers. Few things more pleased us in the customs of the people than the little cots made of wood or stucco, placed between many of their windows, to afford shelter for the martins and the swallows—the expression of an amiable sentiment in the Turk towards the inferior creatures, which some Christians might do well to imitate.

But three objects especially interested us in Smyrna. One of these was the famous Caravan-bridge a little distance out of the city, which spans the Meleus, from whose waters blind Homer may have drunk three thousand years ago. It is at once the chief scene of festivity on all gala days to the Smyrniots, and the great thoroughfare of commerce; for all the rich produce of the East that is to be shipped at Smyrna must pass along this bridge, and all the caravans which pass towards the East and pay toll here, acquire a right to pasture their camels in any part of the Sultan's dominions. It is a common wish of the people, by which they express their idea of becoming rich, that they might possess the value of what passes over this bridge in a single day.

There was a higher form of satisfaction in our visit to the in-

stitution of the Prussian deaconesses. This seemed to us by far the most powerful agency for religious good at work in Smyrna. Unquestionably the Greek Church, in its present corruption and apathy, is powerless against Mohammedanism, and the average Turk is morally quite as good a man as the Greek. The minarets will only diminish here, when the Christianity has become more Christian. But in this admirable institution, reared by Christian benevolence, and presenting the gospel in association with intelligence, purity, refinement, cleanliness and happiness, we have a silently aggressive and leavening power. There are two hundred and twenty female pupils, seventy-five of whom are boarders, and the remainder are day-scholars or half-boarders. There is also connected with this, and sustained by its profits, an orphanage containing thirty-six pupils. Jew, Greek, Armenian, German, French, English, and sometimes Turk, mingle in the same classes. Not only are all the elementary branches of education taught, but several of the modern languages and music; and all is pervaded by a Christian element, and refined by female influence. Nothing could be better than the spaciousness and cleanliness of the apartments, and the completeness of the ventilation. There is a garden in the centre from which the various school-rooms open, so that the breeze not only carries in with it good air, but fragrance. The love of flowers, which shows itself so strongly in all classes in the East, is thus gratified and nurtured; and this also is education, for, with Addison, we place this taste among the half-virtues.

We found another attraction in the tomb of Polycarp, and in the association of the name of that most venerable of all the early Christian martyrs with the epistle from the ascended Christ to the Church of Smyrna. A careful historical criticism, which does not use acids instead of oils, has greatly increased the probability that this very Polycarp was the angel or presiding minister of the Church at Smyrna to which that epistle was

written; and this, best of all, accounts for the key-note of persecution to which, as has been happily said, "the epistle is set." And there seems just as little reason to doubt that that tomb, with its one dark cypress, half-way up Mount Pagus, to which we steered our way around rocks and stones, and up declivities which made an inconveniently near approach to the perpendicular, was the actual grave of that most saintly minister. Mr. Wood, of the British Museum, who found the name "Polucarpos" on the first sarcophagus that he turned up in his excavations at Ephesus, suggested that it might have contained the martyr's dust; but the name was common over the East in those times, and we afterwards saw it on other parts of the Ephesian ruins. This is a tradition which there is no reason to disturb. We walked across a hollow part of the mountain from the tomb to the scene of the martyrdom at the supposed entrance to the ancient stadium, and endeavoured to call up the scene as described by Eusebius and reproduced by Milner. There was no shade of superstition or of excess about it; the departure of Polycarp would have well beseemed one of the apostles. Upon being brought before the tribunal, the proconsul, respecting his dignity and his advanced age, and desirous to save his life, urged him, saying, "Swear, and I will release thee. Reproach Christ." Polycarp answered, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he hath never wronged me; and how can I blaspheme my King who hath saved me?" The proconsul then judging his efforts to be unavailing, sent the herald to proclaim in the midst of the assembly, "Polycarp hath professed himself a Christian." At that hated name, the multitude both of Gentiles and Jews unanimously demanded that he should be burned alive. As soon as the fire was prepared, the old man stripped off his clothes and loosed his girdle: but when they were about to fasten him to the stake, he said, "Let me remain as I am, for He who giveth me strength to sustain the fire will enable me also, without your securing me with nails,

to remain unmoved in the fire." This much was conceded, and his sublime constancy astonished those who had piled the fagots.

> "Amazed they cry, 'What spell is this,
> Which turns his sufferings all to bliss?'"

In a little moment he found the promise to the angel of the Church in Smyrna accomplished in himself, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."

Ephesus was about fifty miles distant, and there was a railway connecting it with Smyrna, and the attraction drawing us to this seat of the first of the seven Churches of Asia now became irresistible. But there were discouragements in the way; for brigands were known to be active in all the neighbourhood. A farmer's son had recently been seized by them, carried off to their horrid robbers' den, and only recovered by the payment of an exorbitant ransom of £1,500. Three of these scoundrels had afterwards been caught by the soldiers of the Sultan, identified by the youth as belonging to the party that had stolen him, and promptly beheaded; and as the Smyrniots are fond of the sensational as well as the better educated communities of the West, photographs of the ghastly heads were being sold in considerable numbers in the few shops in Smyrna that ventured to traffic in literature. Revenge was, therefore, likely now to actuate the remaining brigands as well as cupidity; but though we had the strongest aversion to being bound and blindfolded by ruffians, and treated to their kind of hospitality, the mere possibility of such an unwelcome adventure was not sufficient to deter us.

Lakes and swamps swarming with birds, from the stork and the heron downwards, cultivated patches of land in the midst of wild commons, hills rising sheer in many places to great heights from the margin of the lakes, were among the chief features of the scenery. Our glances at these were alternated by recollections regarding Ephesus as one of the greatest centres of early evangelism. The Temple of Diana, unsurpassed in

architecture, with one hundred and twenty-seven noble columns, each the gift of a king, containing numerous pictures from the pencil of Apelles, and sculptures from the chisel of Praxiteles, rich in untold treasures and votive offerings, with its splendid retinue of priests, its thousands of interested dependants, and with multitudes constantly crowding to it to worship from all quarters of the world, had rendered Ephesus, in Paul's days, the very metropolis of Pagan worship. To this city, "mad upon its idols," Paul had come almost alone, bearing his great message. Aware of its importance, he had laboured in it for the space of two whole years; and with such success as to shake idolatry on its very throne, materially diminishing the traffic of the makers of silver shrines of Diana, turning into penitent disciples the practisers of sorcery and magic, and winning towards himself the respect and protection of some of the chief men of the city. There he had enjoyed the homely fellowship of Aquila and Priscilla, in whose workshop he had not disdained to toil for honest bread, and had been cheered by the manifold ministries of the beloved Onesiphorus. Timothy had remained behind when he left it, as the permanent pastor of its thriving church; and it had become the home of the apostle John in his old age. How tender Paul's recollections were regarding it may be gathered from his matchless address to its elders who came down to Miletus to meet him; how highly he estimated its strength and piety appears from that most heavenly of all his epistles which he addressed to it. How much it was loved and watched by a greater than Paul may be read in the message to it by Christ from heaven.

When we reached the miserable mud village of Ayasolook, the modern Ephesus, we learned that the brigands had been deep in their potations during the previous night, and that drunkenness had probably made them harmless for some hours to come. The first object that attracted our notice when we looked beyond the village was a mosque of large dimensions,

which was named from St. John. It had originally been a Christian temple, built by the Emperor Justinian in honour of the beloved disciple, upon the site of an older church whose date went back to the early Christians. The famous Council of Ephesus, with its two thousand bishops, met within its walls, and found ample accommodation for themselves and their dependants. But the central point of interest in connection with ancient Ephesus was Mount Prion, a mile and a half distant. The first part of our way to it was past a line of lofty marble columns, on the top of each of which, instead of the usual capital, was a stork sitting on her nest, and more than covering the whole summit. We then walked along narrow paths, through the midst of tall rank grass or waving corn-fields, often stumbling over prostrate marble columns, or richly-carved sarcophagi, which had been brought to light by Mr. Wood and his Arab excavators; keeping a sharp look-out all the while for serpents, which are so numerous here that there are men, with long hollow instruments, who devote themselves to their destruction. Everywhere underneath our feet there is the buried city; for wherever excavations have been made, there have been found, not only the marks of its existence, but of its extent and splendour.

We are now wending our way around Mount Prion; and it is evident that the principal public structures of Ephesus were built around the sides, or at the foot of this mountain; while an ancient cemetery can still be traced upon its summit, where, tradition says, the ashes of the beloved apostle were laid. We can say nothing indeed with certainty of the locality of Diana's temple, for hitherto it has baffled the researches of the excavator —the earthquake having probably made its grave very deep.* But with the help of the pencilled sketch with which Mr. Wood supplied us we were able to identify the Forum, the Market-place, the Stadium, the Odeon with its marble seats still rising

* Not long after our visit, however, Diana's temple was discovered, and sculptures of great archæological value sent by Mr. Wood have added to the riches and attractions of the British Museum.

a considerable way up the sides of the mountain; and transcending everything else in magnitude as well as in interest, the Great Theatre, or, as it is popularly named, the Theatre of St. Paul. The proscenium, which has only recently been laid bare, is in good preservation, with its magnificent entrance-gates and its sculptures; and the whole of that extremity of the mountain where it stands appears to have been scooped out up to its summit to afford seats for the spectators. The marble of which the seats were formed has been removed by native Vandals, but their places may still be distinctly traced in the grassy shapes which remain, and rising up from the proscenium to the summit, they must have been capable of holding at least ten thousand spectators. It was into this place that Gaius and Aristarchus, the companions of Paul, were dragged; and here the maddened multitude called for hours together, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians." The theatre looks forth upon what was once the bay of Ephesus, in which, in the days of the city's greatness, a thousand ships were often anchored; and the sight must have been magnificent, whether of the crowded bay as seen from this enormous and splendid edifice, or of the theatre and the mountain with its circle of grand structures, as seen by the ships entering from the sea. All these effects were evidently in the design of the architect; and the whole proves on what a Titanic scale of grandeur the public structures of those times were both planned and executed. But how melancholy is the change! Ruin now bends to ruin. The once crowded bay is now a heap of mud covered with reeds and coarse grass, through which the Cayster winds lazily, sending up exhalations laden with fever and pestilence. Around us for many miles there is one vast grave. It is not only barrenness we look upon, but something that is awfully desolate and judgment-stricken.

It was some hours after sunset on a Saturday evening when we got back to Smyrna. But the night was calm, and the sky "sown with stars," and we glided easily from the shore to our

ship, through waters so very phosphorescent that, at every stroke of the oars, we seemed sailing in a sea of gold. On the following evening we preached in the saloon of the vessel to our English and American fellow-passengers, and to some Christian friends who had come on board from Smyrna to join us in our worship. We spoke of the founding of the Christian Church by Paul at Ephesus. We adverted to the special obstacles which the new religion had to encounter in that citadel of idolatry, with the honour of the city and the interests of so many of its inhabitants dependent on the continuance and supremacy of the old superstition. We spoke of the faith-sustained courage of that solitary man, in thus assailing the false religion in the midst of its most imposing splendours, and in its very tower of strength. We turned attention to the evidence given of the might and mastery of the gospel, in its constraining men like the Ephesian soothsayers to abandon profitable sins, and even to destroy the instruments by which they had won their unhallowed gains. We compared the high flood-tide of Christian life in the Ephesian Church when Paul wrote to it, with its begun decadence and diminished vitality when, in the next generation, the message came to it from Heaven, and we warned our hearers against resting in a traditional religion. We asked each one to inquire for himself whether, in a divine estimate of *his* Christian character, there would not be reason for more than one "Nevertheless, I have somewhat against *thee.*" We noticed the fact that while the candlestick had been removed out of its place, it had not been extinguished, and never would be extinguished out of the world. And we expressed our longing for the time when the light of true Christianity would again be brought back to those beautiful regions, when Ephesus would recover her first love, and when true religion would bring in its train all the blessings of true civilization,—"Length of days in her right hand; and in her left, riches and honour."

XIX.

En Constantinople.

Constantinople as seen from the sea—Views from Constantinople—Enthusiasm toned down—Turkish cemeteries—Moslem quarters—The religion of Mohammed and woman—Frequent conflagrations—Precautions against fires—The imperial mosques—The Golden Horn—Scenes on the bridge—Polyglot city—The Sultan and his escort—The flower bazaar—Scripture phraseology—Mosque of Soliman—Outer court of Mosque of Bajazet—Sacred doves—Wind-chasers—Mosque of St. Sophia—History—Evangelizing—Decay of prejudices—The Jewish children—Bebek—College of the American Mission—Dr. Hamlin's house—Romantic story—Ancient hippodrome—Old cistern—Rhabdomancy [Hosea iv. 12]*—Dr. Millingen—Recollections of Byron—What Constantinople might be.*

WHEN we approached Constantinople in an Austrian steamer from Beyrout, on a bright morning in the month of May, it struck us as the most splendid of European cities. Not even Venice, "daughter of the Sea," or Florence, watered by its beautiful Arno and guarded by its glorious Appenines, so impresses you with an idea of magnificence as does this capital of Islam, as you sail up to it from the Dardanelles. There is no city in the world to which the ocean has been so kind. With the Sea of Marmora lying at its feet, with the deep but narrow inlet of the Golden Horn going up far into the land between the ancient Stamboul and the vast suburbs of Galata and Pera, with the noble sea-stream of the Bosphorus at once separating and uniting its European and its Asiatic shores, the sea may be said not only to touch it kindly, but lovingly to embrace it. Everywhere the streets ascend directly from the waters to eminences of considerable height, giving to its buildings all the architectural effect which is lost to

so many other great cities that are built on plains; for Constantinople, like Rome, is a city of seven hills. Her imperial mosques, with their vast domes and white, lance-like minarets; her palaces and other public buildings; the bright colours of her private houses; and, intermingling with these, trees of every shade of green, in all the fulness and freshness of their early summer beauty—the mulberry, the mimosa of the Nile, the acacia, the Trebizond palm, the plantain, and, above all, the dark and stately cypress often casting its shadow on the shaft of the minaret whose top is bathed in silvery light;—all together make up a picture that is literally dream-like.

These impressions would be deepened were one to place himself in one of those Eastern gondolas or *caiques*,—which seem rather made, however, for the immobility of the Oriental than for the mercurial temperament of the men of the West,—and to sail up the Golden Horn, with long reaches of the immense city on either side of him, until, at the "sweet waters of Europe," the bay narrows itself into the dimensions of a river. And still more, were he to ascend the sunny and sparkling Bosphorus. For ten miles, its shores present a delightful and dazzling panorama. The white summer palaces of the Sultan; the summer residences of foreign ambassadors, merchant princes, and ministers of state; villages nestling in little bays, or crowning the background of hills, and glassing themselves in the tranquil deep beneath; gardens and orchards surrounding those villages as with a setting of emerald;—there, not far off on the Asiatic side, the bay in which the fleet of England lay, and sternly kept the gates of the Black Sea; and, further down, at the point of Scutari, the cemetery in which so many of our Crimean heroes "sleep well."

And there is an added element to one's enjoyment when, placing himself on some lofty point of observation, he looks forth from Constantinople upon scenes that strangely mingle Christian and classic associations:—the regions of Bithynia,

Nicomedia, and Thessaly, the oak-clad Arganthonius, the Mysian Olympus crowned with its eternal diadem of snow, the Isles of the Princes, and the far-off Dardanelles. While night would present the same objects in soft and solemn grandeur, when—

> "The heavens in still magnificence look down
> On the hushed Bosphorus, whose ocean-stream
> Sleeps with its paler stars; the snowy crown
> Of far Olympus, in the moonlight gleam
> Towers radiantly."

We have observed even persons with little of the habit of devotion about them, elevated above their common level by such scenes, and exclaiming, "What a beautiful world God has given to men!"

While it is impossible to obliterate the impressions thus made by the grand and beautiful in external nature, the traveller need not be surprised if he finds the high enthusiasm produced by a first and somewhat distant view of Constantinople considerably toned down by a simple walk from his ship to his hotel. Let him not wonder if, while he follows the "hummal," or porter, up one of the steep, narrow, dirty, and unpaved streets, he comes upon a mother-dog nursing a large family of whelps in a corner, and deems it prudent to make a wide berth between himself and the suspicious mongrel. As the houses are for the most part half-extemporized structures of wood and mud, it is not unlikely that his course will be stopped by the ruins of a house that has just fallen and made the street for the time impassable, or by the ravages of a scarcely-extinguished fire. Or, if he is so fortunate as to escape these more formidable obstructions, streams of camels carrying great stones or dirty rubbish, or porters bearing a heavy burden on a long pole stretched across the entire width of the street, and quite aware that for the time they are "masters of the situation," will make it necessary for him to shrink into the smallest dimensions of which he is capable, in order to escape bruises, or something worse. Experiences like these very much help to disenchant

one of his first glowing admiration, so that it is more than likely that by the time he has reached the door of his hotel, a good deal of the poetry of the morning shall have been turned into prose.

Wandering forth after a short rest, we were not long in tracing the characteristic marks of Mohammedanism, as we had already found them in other parts of the Turkish Empire. One of these was not only the unwalled state of their cemeteries, and their presence in the centre of the most crowded thoroughfares—death obtruding itself and shaking hands with life—but the freedom and familiarity with which these burial-places are frequented by the people. They are visited as persons would go in this country to a public garden or a pleasure-ground. Moslem women come to them with their faces veiled in the usual "yachmash," apparently for no other purpose but to idle away an hour. And both here and outside the walls of Jerusalem, we have seen picnics going on over graves, with the common measure of pleasantry, and with the viands spread out upon the tombstones! We confess we have never been able to reconcile ourselves to this mingled levity and seeming insensibility. Does this behaviour, which is habitual with Mohammedans, arise from their conceptions of Paradise, which represent its inhabitants as engaged in not very dissimilar forms of enjoyment? There is a harsh discord here. *Our* belief in a resurrection makes us reverence all the more the dwellings of the dead; and with all our high Christian hopes, there is an awe with which it seems natural that we should stand in a place of graves and look across the dark river.

You wander further away from the Frank quarter of the city, into those quarters which are the recognized locality of the Turk. Veiled females meet you, guarded by a eunuch. And those grated or latticed windows in the larger houses tell you that you are looking up on the harems of wealthy Moslems. It is here that we see one of the worst and most damnatory

features of Mohammedanism—a feature which inheres in its very existence. Wherever the Moslem faith prevails, woman is branded and degraded. The mischievous influence extends not only to those who are the actual inmates of the harem, but to those who may be introduced into it, and to the children who are the fruits of the harem life. The conjugal relation, as God meant it, is blighted and perverted by the religion of the Crescent. Man is the woman's master, rather than her protector. She is not his soul-mate, but the minister to his pleasures. The history of a millennium has proved the system of the false prophet to be the enemy of free thought, the obstructer of science, the ally of despotism, the instrument of social stagnation; but, perhaps, there is no aspect in which we can regard it in which it has wrought in so many forms of evil as in its violation of "Heaven's first law," in its sanction of polygamy.

We have referred to the likelihood of a stranger who should walk along the streets of Constantinople soon coming upon the blackened marks of some recent conflagration. The fact is that the Turk lives in the constant dread of having his house burned over his head. The houses being built for the most part of wood, a little carelessness may occasion combustion; and when once the flames are kindled, there is no telling how far, in that dry atmosphere, their ravages may spread. We have heard it asserted by residents, that, what with the unsolid character of the buildings, and the frequency and extent of the conflagrations, there is probably not a private dwelling in the immense city that is a hundred years old; few of them have stood for even half that period. The consequence is that measures of the most elaborate kind are used for the prompt discovery and extinction of fires. Two of the most prominent objects in Constantinople, which are sure to attract the eye of a stranger on account of their massiveness and giddy height, are the Galata and the Seraskier towers, the one on the right and the other on the left side of the Golden Horn. These are

watch-towers, commanding a complete view of the whole city, where men are posted day and night to watch the first appearance of fire, and to give the alarm. It is questionable, indeed, whether this was the original design of their erection. The Tower of Galata was a place of defence for the Genoese merchants who long kept possession of that part of the city, and whose houses of merchandise clustered in safety around its base; and that of Seraskier was reared to watch the approach of enemies, especially of the stealthy Tartar, who was accustomed to creep downward, and set fire to the ships that lay in the crowded harbour. But now their only use is against the ravages of an enemy that seldom sleeps long in Constantinople. We ascended the Seraskier Tower, and saw the watchmen taking the range of the whole city with large telescopes, and peering out with all the interest with which we have seen a pilot looking out into a storm. The moment a burst of smoke or a jet of flame is beheld issuing from a house, a basket is hung out from the top of the tower by day, and a lantern by night; cannons are fired; signals are given to indicate the quarter of the city in which the enemy has begun its desolating work; and the alarming cry, "Stamboul hiangin var," echoes through the streets. The chief officers of the Sultan are expected to be speedily on the scene; and should the conflagration last for many hours, the Sultan himself must appear, even at midnight, to encourage the work of extinguishing the flames. One is tempted to ask whether the use of less combustible materials in building would not be a better mode of battling with this daily and terrible calamity. There is a strange contrast between the fierce energy of the Turk during the fire, and his apparent apathy after it has done its destructive work—sitting among the black ruins upon his carpet, which is perhaps the only thing which he has saved from the desolation, and smoking his pipe! Does his fatalism come in as his gloomy solace? or is he consoled by knowing that he must now begin to build? For there is a popular superstition,

in which the Sultan and his subjects alike share—that it is lucky to have some building always on hand, and that death is more likely to keep aloof from a man while his work is unfinished.

But we must pass across the Golden Horn to Stamboul, the old Byzantium, and look in upon some of the grand imperial mosques—the cathedral churches of Islamism. On our way along the pontoon bridge, which connects the new with the older city, we stand and look around us and listen. What a many-coloured and picturesque multitude streams past in both directions, indicating an extraordinary variety of nationality and sect. There is the Effendi Turk, with his snow-white turban; there are the blue-turbaned Jew and the black-turbaned Greek; that is a Dervish in the gray conical-shaped hat; and that strong-limbed, white-kilted passenger, with the pistols in his belt, is an Albanian. Perhaps the representatives of more than thirty nationalities may pass you on that bridge within the space of half an hour; and if you listen and distinguish, you will hear more languages during the same period than were spoken at Pentecost. It is this which must render the labours of the Christian missionary or teacher at Constantinople so exceptionally difficult, but which, after a certain measure of success has been reached, will make them proportionately productive, for the seeds will be carried forth into many lands, and will multiply themselves manifold.

But as we continued to watch the human current, it suddenly stopped, and the bridge began to be densely lined on either side with soldiers. On inquiring of a Turk near us what was the cause of this, we were told that "the Butcher was coming." It was immediately explained that this rather uncomplimentary title was meant for the Sultan; and nothing was more natural than that we should begin to call up visions of wholesale massacres of former favourites who had fallen into disgrace, bowstringed with reason or without reason; or of suspected persons tied in sacks along with a serpent and a cat, and tumbled

at midnight into the Bosphorus. We were assured, however, that the name was given in honour, as intended to describe the most awful prerogative of an Oriental despot,—the power of putting a certain number of persons to death each day without giving a reason. As it turned out that the Sultan was paying his annual visit to the courts of justice, the title did not strike us as very happily chosen. Little value is set upon time in the East, and the Sultan was not punctual. At length the prancing of horses and the clank of arms told us that he was near. The escort was splendid in its richly-adorned officers and ministers of state, bestriding noble Arab steeds, and sitting on saddles covered with cloth of gold. One personage, fantastically dressed, was pointed out to us as the court jester, whose office it is to utter wholesome truths in jest which might be resented if spoken by wise men in earnest. And there was the Sultan himself, with a plume of heron's feathers in his turban, knit together by a diamond clasp of great splendour, sitting in his carriage in dim isolation, like a demigod. There were no cheers from the people. But neither was there any of that abject servility of posture which is practised even by grand viziers and pashas in the awful presence in the palace.

On our way to the mosques, it was impossible to avoid the fascination of the bazaars, in which the old Oriental customs continue much as they have been for many a century. We had seen something similar before both at Cairo and Damascus; but those of Stamboul impressed us quite as much with their extent, variety, and wealth. Lines of streets covered and painted, with their shops entirely open in front, stretch over many miles of the old city. Almost every custom you notice in them contrasts with the trading life of the West. The shopkeepers, sitting cross-legged, and smoking their long pipes or bubbling narghelis, seem indifferent about traffic, and everything else that is sublunary. The old practice remains, which we have noticed in some other cities, and of which

we have many traces in the Old Testament Scriptures, of having whole streets devoted to particular branches of merchandise. Thus there is a street for spices and perfumes, one for armour, one for silver ornaments, one for flowers, and so on. We can see at a glance that Asia supplies the material of this curiously-varied traffic far more than the manufactories of Manchester or Sheffield; and that they are much more indebted for their attractions to caravans from Bagdad, and ships from the eastern shores of the Black Sea, than to vessels coming from the West, either by the Danube or the Dardanelles. Constantinople, though built on the soil of Europe, is Asiatic in its tastes. Even its principal burying-ground is across on the shores of Asia; as if its people could not rid themselves of the presentiment that one day they may have to leave Europe, and "return to the place from which they came out." We are not sure that the Turk would be willing, at whatever gain to convenience, to exchange his mode of traffic for that which prevails in the Frank quarter of the city. The dim light of his bazaars makes it more difficult for the purchaser to detect an imperfection or a flaw. Our discovery of a crack in a small bottle of perfume which we purchased, brought out a Scripture form of speech from our venerable-looking old merchant, for which we could almost have consented to be cheated: "That be upon mine own head." The flower-bazaar is one of singular variety and beauty, and it brings out an amiable trait in the character of the Turk. He is a sincere lover of flowers, and spends an unusual proportion of his means in ministering to this passion. To him they are "links wedding his heart to nature." He seems to compensate himself for his opposition to sculpture and other plastic arts by this amiable taste, which, like cleanliness, is surely one of the nearest neighbours to godliness.

But already our thoughts have begun to wander from the bazaars of Constantinople to its mosques; and, with the hot

sun beating on us, we are glad when we at length reach the protection of the Mosque of Soliman the Magnificent. There are in all two hundred common mosques scattered over the city, and fourteen imperial ones,—to one of which the Sultan comes in state to worship every Friday, which is the Mohammedan Sabbath. This, which we enter after having "put our shoes from off our feet," was built three hundred years ago, and is the largest of them all. Its vast proportions produce a sense of awe; and those innumerable lamps which hang from the dome-shaped roof must produce, when lighted, an extraordinary effect, bringing up some of the most dream-like pictures of the "Arabian Nights." On Friday, a sacred sheikh preaches from an elevated platform to many thousands. On common days, about forty teachers are scattered over the immense carpeted floor; and seated on cushions, and each surrounded by about sixty hearers, they give instruction in the duties of morality and explain the Koran. On every day the mosque is open as a place of prayer for those who may choose to come and worship in it. Let us make the frank acknowledgment that there is something less repulsive to our mind in a vast and solemn structure like this, with no image in it, than in a Latin or Greek church, with images or pictures everywhere obtruded on our notice, avowedly to assist devotion, practically misleading, or dwarfing, or absorbing it. There is something of highest sublimity in addressing a Being whom we believe to be present, though invisible. Mohammedanism has surely done some good in its protest against all idols and image worship, and in holding up to view the fundamental doctrine of the unity of God. But this is all that we are able to concede. This grand doctrine is useful mainly as the essential foundation of other truths necessary to be known in order to man's true peace and happiness. It is not merely of God in his personality, but of God in his relations to our fallen race, that we need to be instructed in a revelation. And the Koran is silent on the fact

of a finished atonement and a living intercessor. What would Christianity itself be without its Calvary? Mohammedanism gives you an unfinished sentence, which the gospel of Christ has completed, not only declaring that "there is one God," but that there is "one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

We shall not enter the next great mosque to which we are conducted—that of Bajazet; for we know that it is only a repetition of what we have seen, and there are sights enough to interest us in its outer court. We find it crowded with articles of merchandise and noisy with trade—spices and medicines, brightly-coloured cloths from the looms of Asia, toys and Oriental confections; and even the petty money-changer is not wanting to complete the picture. We are reminded of another temple associated with a purer faith, and of One who drove the intruders out with his small whip of cords.

But in one corner of this outer court, which is not occupied by these noisy traffickers, there is another sight. Multitudes of beautiful doves, almost literally appearing as if they had "wings of silver, and feathers of yellow gold," are seated upon shady trees; for this outer court, like that of the ancient temple at Jerusalem, is open to the sky above. And they are not uncared for. At intervals a man scatters corn on the pavement, and they fly down without fear to pick it up. It is not by chance that they are there, or through the mere caprice of some one in power. They are, in fact, sacred birds, as an unwary Frank would speedily discover in blows, or something worse, did he dare to molest them. They are protected and endowed in this way in memory of that well-known event in the history of Mohammed, when his pursuers came up in hot haste to the cave in which he lay concealed, and hesitated whether they should enter it in search of him. A dove flying out from the mouth of the cave at the moment, led them to conclude that he was not there; and so they passed on, and

the history of the world was shaped anew by that little incident. The pigeon has been a sacred bird with the Mohammedans ever since.

They have a very different feeling in respect to another bird which every one meets with flying rapidly and in great numbers as he sails along the Bosphorus. These birds are never seen to rest, and, accordingly, one of their popular names is, "wind-chasers." But the old doctrine of the transmigration of spirits lingers in the East; and by many a Turk is it believed that the souls of wicked men who have died are inhabiting the bodies of these birds, and in this weary unrest are enduring their punishment. They are therefore secretly spoken of as "souls in torment."

But the mosque of St. Sophia, to which we next went, is surrounded with a unique interest. It was not originally a mosque, but a Christian temple, erected by the Emperor Justinian in the sixth century; and even this was built upon the ruins of an earlier Christian edifice that had been destroyed by fire, and which had many a time resounded with the rich and noble eloquence of St. Chrysostom. Justinian sought to enrich it with architectural spoils gathered from every part of the heathen world—columns of jasper from the Temple of Diana at Ephesus, pillars of marble from the Temple of the Sun at Palmyra, enormous urns of porphyry that held the "lustral waters" of idol-worship, brought from Pergamos, and turned into fonts for Christian baptism; while all the wealth of the Byzantine Empire and all the architectural skill of Byzantine art united in rearing a temple which many regard as exceeding in magnificence, not only St. Mark's at Venice, but St. Peter's at Rome. It is said that when the great enterprise was completed, Justinian exclaimed, with a gratitude in which there was some mixture of self-complacency, — "Glory be to God, who has esteemed me worthy to achieve a work so sublime! Oh, Solomon! I have surpassed thee." Though Mohammedan

jealousy has destroyed or disfigured the greater number of its ornaments that had any Christian reference, it is understood that some very elaborate representations of scriptural subjects have been covered over rather than defaced; and it is curious to notice on one of its doors an indubitable cross remaining; while the pictures of the six-winged cherubim are still among the most prominent objects that "shine through the scintillations of masses of gilded crystal in the galleries." No ecclesiastical structure, beheld in its interior, gave us a profounder sense of vastness than this, its lofty dome rising above you like a firmament, and its stately pillars, seen far off in the dim light, appearing like gigantic stems of trees in a great forest. When is this noble structure to be recovered to Christian uses?

Of the evangelizing agencies which we found at work in Constantinople, one of the most active was devoted to the Jews. This was conducted by missionaries of the Scotch Church in Haskioy, one of the largest suburbs, and by teachers generally from Scotland, in obscure places down towards the shore, in some of the poorest streets of Galata. As the language spoken by the Jews varies with the countries from which they have been gathered, the teachers have found a formidable difficulty in this confusion of tongues; but being thoroughly in earnest, they have conquered it. We were astonished at the amount of Christian instruction which the Jewish children were allowed by their parents to receive in the schools, and at the extent of their knowledge of the facts of the New Testament. Probably the parents calculate that their children will retain the secular advantages of the schools, and that the Christian impressions and associations will be thrown off when they return to exclusively Jewish circles. But this is not always the case. And meanwhile, it is the unanimous testimony of all the teachers that the prejudices of the young generation of Jews against Christianity are greatly diminished. The incredulity may continue in the case of the greater number;

but the gall of the old fanaticism has been dried up. One of the most pleasant sounds we heard in Constantinople was that of a number of Jewish inquirers who had come by night for conversation with a humble evangelist, in whose house we were sitting. Their discussion ended by their singing together a number of Christian hymns in German. This was the beginning of motion among the dry bones.

Certainly one of the most hopeful agencies we met with in the neighbourhood of this Moslem metropolis was the College of the American Mission, in the beautifully situated town of Bebek, about ten miles up the Bosphorus. Besides training a native Christian ministry, it gives a high-class scientific and literary education to its general students, this being pervaded by a Christian and Protestant element. When we were there, the number of students was seventy-five, and seventy of these were boarders. There cannot be a doubt that this well-planned and organized institution will attract towards it, in considerable numbers, Moslem youths of the higher families. It has begun to do this already. And as little can it be doubted that the valuable concessions in favour of religious liberty, obtained from the Sublime Porte by Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, and the feelings in favour of England produced among the Turks by the events and the issue of the Crimean War, have greatly diminished the difficulty of access to the Mohammedan mind on the subject of Christianity. But it is not any of the corrupt Churches that have hitherto for the most part represented our religion in the East, that are to drive the false prophet from his seat of power. It was a dead Christianity that Mohammed conquered, and it is neither a dead nor a grossly corrupted Christianity that is to drive him out. A philosophical Turk remarked lately to a Christian physician of eminence in Constantinople—"We do not fear the Latin Church with its images, or the Greek Church with its pictures and its ungainly and empty forms. These can do nothing to shake the hold which the

Moslem faith has of the East. But we do fear, because we respect, your simple Protestant worship of God without any material representation or medium; and we dread the power and prevalence of your gospel which presents God as love." The large house at present occupied by the American college at Bebek, is only held by them in temporary possession. They are proceeding to erect, at the sole expense of one munificent American, a Mr. Roberts, a college-building on a high hill behind Bebek, which will be a landmark for every ship entering the Bosphorus from the Black Sea. But there is a story connected with the present house, told us by Dr. Hamlin, the able president of the college, which shows us how romance and generous impulses occasionally play their part even in Turkey.

Just about a hundred years ago, two young men were engaged by their parents in assisting them in the shops respectively kept by them: the one was a tobacconist, the other a baker. The shops stood opposite to each other at the corner of one of the streets of Pera, and the two youths meeting and conversing every day, grew up in intimacy which ripened into fast friendship. By-and-by, however, the young tobacconist became impatient of weighing out lumps of "Latakia" and taking piastres in return; and one day he announced to his friend his intention to leave Constantinople, and try his fortune elsewhere, expressing his confidence that a grander destiny lay before him than that of tobacco-selling. The young baker was inconsolable at losing him; but no argument or persuasion could drive him from his purpose. He went to a far-distant place in the Turkish Empire, and in a few years all knowledge regarding him by his old friends was lost. He was received into situations of trust. He became the secretary of a pasha; and when the pasha died, he became his successor. He was removed from one pashalic to another of greater magnitude and importance. In thirty-five years he was raised to be Grand Vizier, and re-

turned to Constantinople in possession of an authority and splendour only second to that of the Sultan himself. He was now a man of years, with a long white beard; but through all the long interval, he had never forgotten the friend of his youth. Was he still alive? One of the earliest acts of the new vizier was to send one of his chief servants down to the corner of the old street in Pera, to inquire whether a baker with his friend's name still kept shop there; and, if so, to tell him that the Grand Vizier commanded him immediately into his presence. The baker was long before this time a married man with numerous children, and the message went like a death-knell to his heart; for commands like this usually boded either imprisonment or death. He asked the servant, in terror, what he had done to bring upon him such a message. He had cheated no man. He had not used false weights or uneven balances. He had not adulterated the flour with which his bread was baked. His neighbours were drawn into his house by the noise of his lamentations and entreaties, as well as by those of his wife and children. But the servant must obey his orders, and take him with him by force if he longer refused to come. He went; and through the midst of numerous guards, and of splendours almost regal, was led into the presence of the Grand Vizier. He was asked whether he was the baker trading at the corner of a certain street in Pera. He acknowledged that he was, at the same time protesting his innocence of any charges that might have been brought against him, and casting himself down at the Grand Vizier's feet. Then the vizier asked him whether he remembered the young tobacconist who had been his companion in the days of his early manhood, and who had suddenly gone from his side to court a better fortune far away. Did he not yet recognize the voice and the countenance of the friend of his youth? The man looked up—all his fears fled; and in another moment the two men were locked in each other's arms. It ended in the baker's being raised to the

high office of chief treasurer to the Grand Vizier; and the present spacious building, occupied by the College of the American Mission at Bebek, is this chief treasurer's old summer-house!

One is apt to be disappointed at the comparatively few remains of antiquity that present themselves in a city so large as Constantinople, and with so long a history behind it. The frequent and wide-spread conflagrations in part account for this; still more, the fact that this city has had so many conquerors and a corresponding succession of masters, each of whom did his utmost to obliterate the marks of his predecessor. The wreath of sand raised by the wave of one conquest has been cancelled by the next. The hippodrome, or ancient race-course, into which half the population of old Byzantium used to pour itself, and where emperors watched the chariot-races as they would have done the issue of a great battle, retains around it scarcely even a lingering glory. And the grand old cistern of Stamboul, erected by Constantine, and said to have been capable of containing a supply of water sufficient for the wants of the city for sixty days, with hundreds of marble pillars supporting its spacious roof, is now a vast damp cellar, into which you descend by a rickety wooden stair, and in which some half-naked men, moving about like the figures in Dante's "Inferno," where the very light is darkness, ply the humble art of rope-spinning. But we were fortunate in meeting with one specimen of great antiquity and of considerable Biblical interest.

This was a beautiful alabaster bas-relief, in excellent preservation, representing the ancient practice of rhabdomancy, or divination by rods. There is one allusion to this form of superstition in Hosea iv. 12, from which it appears that the revolted Israelites had adopted it, in common with so many other heathen practices: "My people ask counsel at their stocks, *and their staff declareth unto them.*" One mode of divining by this means was to set up a number of rods in the

earth, and when they fell during the muttering of certain verses and incantations, to derive the wished-for presages from the direction of the fall. But another method was for a person to take a rod and measure its length by spans, saying each time alternately, "I will go—I will not go;" or, "I will do—I will forbear;" and then he decided, according to the alternative which was associated with the last span. It is this second method that is represented in the bas-reliefs we are describing. A woman is the diviner, and two persons are consulting her, and waiting her decision with an interest evidently not unmixed with fear. This alabaster was drawn up a few years since by some fishermen, from the Bosphorus near its entrance to the Black Sea, opposite the sacred promontory of Jupiter Ourios, on which was a temple to which mariners used to resort and pray for favourable winds. It is supposed to date five hundred years before Christ. It became the property of the venerable Dr. Millingen, an eminent English physician in Constantinople.

From the same good physician we received some recollections and impressions of Lord Byron, on whom he had attended during his last illness at Missolonghi. There were some few topics on which Byron could never touch in conversation without bitterness. One of these was the harsh treatment he had received in his youth from his mother, who with an excess of blandishment at one moment, taunted him the next with ingenious and most unmotherly cruelty because of his deformed foot. This treatment seems to have given the first touch of misanthropy to a nature that was originally not unkind or ungenerous; but, except when his path was crossed by this and one or two other spectres, his conversation was genial and sometimes playful.

Though he was reserved in his references to the supreme subject of religion, yet, when he did allude to it, he showed an accurate acquaintance with the facts of Scripture; and, while unsettled in his convictions on many matters of Christian

belief, he would have resented the charge of infidelity as a slander and a wrong. One of his sayings to Dr. Millingen was, "Should I get well again, don't be surprised if I become a bigot;" by which he evidently meant, a person with strong and definite beliefs. But he appears to have had the sad consciousness, beneath all his efforts at cheerfulness, that while he had won a great earthly immortality, he had not found solid rest, and was not like the eagle standing in sunlight on the rock, but rather like the bird wounded, and fluttering, and sinking over a dark abyss.

One morning at breakfast, when there was a return of some of his earlier brightness, Dr. Millingen suggested that he might gratify his friends by writing a few verses. He received the request kindly, at the same time declaring himself to be utterly untuned and unstrung for poetry. He retired, however, to another apartment, and in a few hours returned with those well-known verses, sorrowful alike in their retrospect and their forebodings, which proved indeed to be his last. He read them with a thrill of emotion that lighted up his countenance as with fire, and made his whole frame quiver:—

"'Tis time this heart should be unmoved,
Since others it has ceased to move;
Yet though I cannot be beloved,
Still let me love.

"My days are in the yellow leaf;
The flowers and fruits of love are gone;
The worm, the canker, and the grief
Are mine alone."

But our notes were to be of Constantinople. We suppose few can have looked at the unrivalled geographical position of this splendid city, without inquiring why it is not a centre of immeasurably greater power and influence. Placed at the point of junction between two great continents, within a few hours of the mouths of the Danube, not far from the valley of the Euphrates, holding in its hand the key of one of the doors of the Black Sea, and commanding the eastern gateway of the

Mediterranean, why is it not commercially and politically among the mightiest, instead of needing to be bolstered and guarded, like a sick man, by other nations? Perhaps some would answer, that nations and cities as often become great by conquering natural difficulties as by seizing natural advantages. Others, comparing what the proud city would be with what she is, have sarcastically replied, with Montesquieu, "God permitted that Turks should exist on the earth—a people the most fit to possess uselessly a great empire." Education, true Christianity, and liberty would make Constantinople, in a century, the mistress of the sunny East, and the benefactress of three continents.

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